

History of World War II 1939–1945

The struggle of progressive forces
for the preservation of peace

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Military publishing house, The origin of war.

Selected Articles

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The first volume of the "History of the Second World War" covers the period from the end of the First World War to the autumn of 1935. Its first part is devoted to the origin of war in the system of world imperialism, showing fascism as a strike force of imperialism and militarism, and the history of the emergence of the first centers of a new world war. The second part of the volume reveals the world-historical significance of the construction of socialism in the USSR, the development of its Armed Forces, the intense struggle of the peace-loving peoples, led by the Soviet Union, against the danger of a new world war.

Translated by Svitlana M. for ML Discussion Group to study for the analysis of the war in Ukraine.

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From the main editorial committee

The Second World War raged for six long years. In its entire history, humanity has never experienced such an acute military conflict between the forces of extreme reaction and the forces of social progress. Everything that was created by the mind and hands of generations over the centuries was thrown into the scales of war. It is terrible to imagine what life on the globe would have turned into if fascist aggression had not been blocked by the forces of freedom and progress, the main of which was the material and spiritual might of the Soviet Union. Eternally imprinted in the grateful memory of mankind is the unprecedented feat of those who, at the cost of incredible effort, won a great victory over fascism with their blood and life.

The victory of the progressive forces contributed to the acceleration of the irreversible process of the formation of a new, socialist world. It confirmed the world-historical significance of the Great October Socialist Revolution, its powerful, life-affirming influence on the destinies of mankind. The role of the Soviet state, led by the Communist Party, as the base of the world revolutionary process, the bulwark of the freedom and independence of peoples, has grown even more.

The Second World War took place in a new era of world history, opened by the October Revolution, in the era of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism. The main historical pattern of this epoch—the revolutionary establishment of a new, communist social system—steadily overcame the difficulties that arose in its path and the obstacles placed by the old world. Its irresistible strength was manifested in the growing successes of the world's first socialist state, in the strengthening of its influence on the course of international events and the development of the world revolutionary movement. It showed itself especially clearly in the fact that it was the Soviet socialist state that made the decisive contribution to the crushing of the aggressors during the Second World War.

Soviet historical science has already done a lot for a comprehensive study of the history of the Second World War. Historians of the

socialist countries have made significant progress. Much work is being done by progressive authors in capitalist states, especially those who are guided by Marxist-Leninist methodology.

Collections of documents, multi-volume studies and books have been published. They examine the causes of the war, its nature, course, and outcome, show the decisive role of the masses in the victory over fascism, reveal the true motives of the policies of various states, deeply analyze military operations on all fronts of the war and the activities of the rear of the warring states. Soviet historians have convincingly demonstrated the invincible strength and might of the socialist social and state system; the leading and guiding role of the Communist Party, its enormous authority among the masses; steadfastness, military prowess, and the greatest energy of our people in military affairs and in work.

The past is inextricably linked to the present and the future. Its assessment is of a class character. Reactionary writers deliberately distort the events of recent times. They give them a false interpretation, make every effort to whitewash capitalism, trying to remove from it the responsibility for the outbreak of war. Some of them, while recognizing that fascism unleashed the war, deny, however, the indisputable fact that this terrorist dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie is a product of imperialism. Some of the falsifiers are even trying to lay the responsibility for the outbreak of the war on the Soviet Union. To this end, they are reviving Hitler's version of Germany's "preventive war" against the USSR.

Reactionary historiography hushed up the significance of the greatest battles on the Soviet-German front, in which the back of the fascist German army was broken and the complete defeat of Nazi Germany was a foregone conclusion. At the same time, it exalts the operations carried out by the US and British troops on secondary fronts, and in every possible way justifies and defends the ruling circles of the US and Britain, which delayed the opening of a second front in Europe for a long time and evaded fulfilling the solemn obligations assumed by the Allied Powers during the war years. Its representatives do not hide their hostility to the Soviet partisan movement and the resistance movement in the countries of Europe

and Asia occupied by the invaders. At the same time, they extol the bourgeois opposition to the collaborators in these countries and to the fascist dictatorship in Germany. The liberation mission of the Soviet Armed Forces is presented in a false light, to which are attributed expansionist intentions alien to them are attributed to the very social nature of the Soviet state. The historiography of the Second World War, falsified in this way, merges into a single whole with the propaganda of outright militarism. This situation makes it especially necessary to create a scientific history of the past war.

The great victory of the freedom-loving peoples over fascism in World War II had a profound effect on the course of world history, the public consciousness and psychology of the population of all countries and created new opportunities for the development of the world revolutionary process.

Almost three decades separate us from the time when the Second World War ended. The wounds of war healed long ago on the land scorched by the fire of battles, rose from the ruins and ashes of the city and village. More than half of the world's population was born and raised after the war. However, its history, results and consequences continue to influence the current international situation, social processes, and are of lasting importance for the military-patriotic education of our soldiers, all Soviet people. That is why the development on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist methodology of the multi-volume work "History of the Second World War" was undertaken.

The history of the Second World War shows the greatness and irresistible strength of socialism, the patriotic and international feat of the multinational people of our country, rallied around the Communist Party, the organizer and inspirer of all its victories.

Historical experience calls the peoples to vigilance, to active participation in the struggle to prevent a new world war.

(...)

A multi-volume work on the history of the Second World War - a study that examines all aspects and processes, features and

characteristics of the war: its prehistory, origin and development; the goals of the belligerents, the course of hostilities in all theaters and continents; partisan movement, anti-fascist struggle and resistance movement; the level of technical equipment of the armed forces, the principles and possibilities of their effective management; development of military science, strategy, operational art and tactics; economy, politics and ideology in the countries participating in the war; the interweaving of national liberation and social, as well as internationalist goals of the working class and all working people in the struggle against fascism; the place and role of the communist and workers' parties in rallying the masses; international relations and diplomatic struggle; results, lessons and consequences of the war. In elucidating all the diverse problems of the war, a special place is given to showing the role of the masses of the people—the true creators of history, the activities of communists, workers, and all progressive parties. All these forces made a decisive contribution to achieving victory over fascism.

I

The preparation and unleashing of a second world war by the reactionary and aggressive circles of imperialism is the gravest crime against the peoples of the entire planet.

The Second World War did not arise suddenly, it matured during the two decades that separated it from the end of the First World War. All these years there has been a process of deepening the general crisis of capitalism, the aggravation of all its economic and social contradictions. The role of state-monopoly capitalism in the economy and politics of the bourgeois states increased, militarism intensified, and the exploiting classes in a number of countries began to resort to fascist methods of consolidating their rule.

War broke out within the capitalist world as a result of a sharp intensification of antagonisms between capitalist countries due to the operation of the law of their uneven development under imperialism. The responsibility for its emergence lies with imperialism as a social system, with the ruling classes and the governments of the major capitalist powers. However, in the new

historical conditions generated by the Great October Socialist Revolution and the existence of the Soviet state, the contradictions between the capitalist powers and their groupings were not the only factor in world politics. They developed in interaction with the fundamental contradiction of the era - between two opposite social systems: capitalism and socialism.

With the maturing of war between the two capitalist groupings of powers, their desire to form a united front against the growing socialism also increased. The ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan were politically speculating on anti-Sovietism. When, by the will of the monopolists, a fascist dictatorship was established in Germany, the reactionary circles in the USA, Britain and France considered that with its help it would be possible to crush the Soviet Union and resolve in favor of capitalism the main contradiction of the era. That is why the aggressive fascist regime was provided by them with all possible political, diplomatic, financial, and economic assistance. That is why the governments of the USA, Britain and France opposed the creation of a united front to ensure peace. Under these conditions, Nazi Germany assumed the role of the main striking force of world imperialist reaction.

The general crisis of capitalism sharpened the expansionist intentions of the imperialist powers. At the same time, the opposition of the peoples to the advance of state-monopoly capital and the threat of war increased, and the revolutionary initiative of the masses developed. The struggle of the progressive forces, especially the Soviet Union and the international working class, against the impending world war created serious obstacles to the militant policy of imperialism.

In the years leading up to the Second World War, there was a real opportunity to keep the peace. It was due to the constant strengthening of the economic and defensive might of the USSR, its peace-loving policy, the general upsurge of the communist, revolutionary-democratic, national liberation movement, the growth of mass actions of the working class, broad sections of the population in defense of peace. Relying on the totality of these factors and conditions, the Soviet Union vigorously fought to curb

fascist aggression. The plan of collective security put forward by him realistically took into account the balance of forces on our planet, the vital interest of the peoples in the preservation of peace, and the prospects for the development of international relations. The implementation of this plan could block the way for the fascist aggressors.

The progressive public in all countries understood that the impending war would bring unparalleled disasters to mankind and would appear reactionary, predatory, imperialist on the part of the fascist states. And if the unjust nature of the First World War was determined by the striving of the capitalist participants for the redivision of the world, then in the Second World War the plans of the fascist states went much further. They were calculated to eliminate the greatest socialist achievements of mankind, embodied in the socialist state, to enslave and exterminate entire peoples, plunging them into the abyss of such inhumanity as history has never known before. Therefore, the struggle against fascism, while meeting the fundamental interests of the peoples, acquired a just and liberating character.

The policy of the ruling circles of the United States, Britain and France counteracted the objective possibility of rallying anti-fascist forces on an international scale and preserving peace. Their encouragement of fascist aggression, bordering on national betrayal, was covered with a fig leaf of "appeasement" of Germany. The culminating point of this policy was the Munich Agreement of 1938, which obligingly handed over the sovereign Czechoslovak state to Hitler to be torn to pieces and provided the invaders with an advance payment for further movement to the east.

The Munich agreement was all the more dangerous because it could lead to the creation of an aggressive anti-Soviet bloc of Germany and Italy with England and France. In an effort to prevent such a development of events, which is disastrous for progressive mankind, the Soviet Union continued to make efforts aimed at creating collective security and concluding a treaty on mutual assistance against aggression. However, the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations in the summer of 1939 showed that the governments of Britain and

France preferred an anti-Soviet agreement with Germany, with which they had already exchanged non-aggression pledges, to such a treaty. This forced the USSR to agree to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany.

The growing threat of war was confronted by the international working class. But the unity of his efforts was undermined by the leaders of the right-wing socialists. When fascism rushed to power and having seized it, rushed along the path to war, they abandoned joint actions with the communists and other leftist forces and actually contributed to the development of aggression. Against the will of the workers, who constituted the majority of the members of the Social Democratic parties, the leaders of the right-wing socialists united with the governments of their countries in pursuing the shameful policy of "non-intervention" and "neutrality", which condoned aggression and played a significant role in unleashing a world war.

Under the existing historical conditions, it was not possible to block the path of imperialist aggression. The forces that opposed the war acted in isolation and proved insufficient to avert the military threat hanging over humanity. One of the main reasons for this was the split in the working class of the capitalist countries by the leaders of the right-wing socialists. The material might of socialism was not so great as to independently solve in full the task of curbing aggression.

However, contrary to the plans of the ruling circles of England, France and the USA, World War II began with a clash between two capitalist coalitions.

This happened for a number of reasons. Firstly, because war was born within the capitalist world, outside of which it could not have arisen. Secondly, because the antagonism between the two different social systems by no means ruled out the growing internal contradictions of imperialism; they intensified still more, as the capitalist powers fiercely fought for world domination. Thirdly, in striving for the international isolation of the Soviet Union, the ruling circles of Britain and France undermined the possible even then unity of the opponents of the fascist states, weakened their own

countries, and brought them face to face with the hungry predators—German fascism and Japanese militarism. Fourthly, the constant search by England,

The war that broke out within the capitalist system, on the part of Germany, Italy, Japan, throughout its political goals and character was unjust and predatory. The plans and actions of the bloc of fascist states headed by Germany and Japan expressed the interests of the most reactionary social forces and contradicted the progressive course of historical development.

The declaration of war by England and France on Germany was a forced act on their part, an acknowledgment of the complete bankruptcy of the pre-war policy of the governments of these countries. It opened up the possibility of a transition to a new policy - the policy of rebuffing the aggressor. But this possibility did not become a reality in those months because the governments of England and France remained true to their former course of "non-intervention" in relation to perishing Poland. They did not want the defeat of German fascism, that system, which even in peacetime was recognized as meeting their class interests. They persistently continued to strive to induce Germany to turn its arms against the Soviet Union, to achieve their mutual weakening in a bloody struggle, to maintain and expand their positions in the world.

When the flames of war had already blazed across the expanses of Europe, England and France did not take any offensive actions against Germany. Their war in September 1939 - April 1940 was called "strange" by bourgeois publicists, which emphasized its main feature - the absence of active hostilities on the part of England and France, contrary to their statements about their intention to repulse Germany. If the essence of the war lies in the continuation of the policy of the ruling classes by violent means, then the "strange war" on the part of England and France continued their Munich policy in a modified form and in fact without the use of violent means. Thus, the "strange war" did not contain anything strange. It was a certain political course, directed against the USSR with its tip and aimed at creating an anti-Soviet front. While bravura music blared in the bivouacs and in the dugouts of the French Maginot Line, and the

soldiers filled their leisure time with playing football, the reactionaries of England and France, in deep secrecy from the peoples, were taking new steps not only towards conspiracy with Germany against the USSR, but also towards military action. attack on the Soviet Union. As for fascist Germany, it combined active military operations with strategic pauses, during which it regrouped and built up its armed forces.

The Second World War, engendered by the mutual struggle of the capitalist powers, began as an imperialist war on both sides—on the part of Germany and Japan, and on the part of Britain and France. In the appeal for the 22nd anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Comintern assessed the war as follows: "This war is a continuation of many years of imperialist litigation in the camp of capitalism" {1} . But it could not stop, let alone eliminate, the objective processes of the gradual intensification of the just struggle of the peoples against fascist oppression.

The communists and the truly patriotic forces of Germany, Japan, and Italy, as well as the satellite countries led by them, stood for the defeat of governments and totalitarian regimes in an unjust war. The Communist Party of Germany called on the working people of the country and the soldiers of the Nazi Wehrmacht to solidarity with the peoples who were victims of aggression, to deploy a resistance movement "against the internal enemy" {2} .

For Poland, which became a victim of fascist aggression, the war against Nazi Germany took on the character of a just, liberation, anti-fascist one. This happened because the rebuff to the invaders was by no means a continuation of the imperialist, anti-Soviet policy of the ruling circles of pre-war Poland, but a kind of denial of it, its complete collapse. An armed rebuff to the Nazis expressed the fundamental interests of the working class and all working people, of the entire nation, which was under a real threat of physical destruction. The just war of the popular masses of China against the Japanese invaders, the patriotic actions of the working people of Czechoslovakia were also a clear manifestation of the national liberation struggle. A number of documents of the Comintern stated the development of the national liberation movement in the Second

World War. The Communist Parties were recommended to do everything possible to further strengthen this character of the struggle. This is exactly what was said, in particular, in the directive of G. Dimitrov and K. Gottwald to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, dated September 14, 1939.{3}

Each new act of aggression by the fascist states provoked a growing rebuff from the peoples and led to the ever-greater expansion of the national liberation movement. On the part of Norway, Belgium and Holland, the war against Germany that attacked them had a just, national liberation character {4} .

The "strange war" on the part of England and France was a logical continuation of their Munich policy. But when Hitler's Germany invaded France, the further continuation of this policy, despite its recurrences, became impossible, because it led directly to destruction. The objective course of events put forward the task of protecting national independence from the threat of fascist enslavement. The Communist parties of France and England came out with a demand to change the nature of the war against Nazi Germany, to turn it into a national liberation, just one. The French Communist Party put forward a defense program based on the premise that the war was turning into a people's war for the preservation of the French independent state, for the salvation of the nation {5}. In the days when the German hordes rushed to Paris, the Communist Party again demanded "to change the nature of the war, turning it into a people's war for the freedom and independence of the motherland" {6} .

The peoples of European countries responded to the invasion of the Nazis by increasing resistance, giving it a clearly expressed anti-fascist, national liberation character. It soon became known as the resistance movement. On the European continent, it arose in Czechoslovakia and Poland, then in Norway, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, and France. It included the patriots of Yugoslavia, whose partisan struggle was gaining strength especially quickly, as well as those of Greece.

The strengthening of the national liberation character of the war against fascist Germany testified to the inflexibility of the will of the peoples to resist fascism. The British government was influenced by the gradual realization that Germany had created a real threat to the national existence of England and that the path of collusion with Germany was pernicious. That is why the British government finally decided to abandon this path, hoping to strengthen its position in the British Empire.

Hitlerite Germany's attack on the USSR was a direct expression of the policy of imperialism, a sharp increase in the reactionary nature of the war on its part. The Great Patriotic War, to which the peoples of the USSR, led by the Leninist party, rose, became the most important component of the Second World War, the highest stage of a just war—a war in defense of the socialist Fatherland. The working class and the working masses of the entire world have acquired a clear program of struggle for the complete defeat of the aggressors and the destruction of fascism, the salvation of the peoples from barbarism and atrocities, and the granting of freedom of socio-economic order to them.

An armed confrontation was launched between the socialist state, in alliance with the democratic forces of many countries, against their worst and treacherous enemies—German fascism and Japanese militarism, which formed the most reactionary grouping of the capitalist countries. This confrontation meant a fundamental qualitative change in the socio-political nature, scale, course, and prospects of the Second World War. It had a pronounced class character and was an extremely sharp manifestation of the struggle between two opposing social systems. The struggle between them unfolded in all spheres: military, political, economic, diplomatic, and ideological.

In December 1941, Japan's attack on the United States of America involved the United States in a war against the fascist states. However, the financial and industrial circles of the overseas power, no less zealously than the British bourgeoisie, strove to use military operations for their own class purposes.

The coincidence of the fundamental national interests of a number of states and the liberation nature of the war against the bloc of aggressors became the cementing foundation on which, for the first time in history, an international front of various socio-political forces was formed. The creation of the anti-Hitler coalition, in which the heroic Soviet people played the key role, was actively promoted by Soviet foreign policy. The Land of Soviets followed V. I. Lenin's behest not to renounce "military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other [XIII] in such cases when this agreement, without violating the foundations of Soviet power, could strengthen its position and paralyze the onslaught on it which - either an imperialist power...» {7} .

The military and political strategy of the US and British governments during the years of the armed struggle was influenced by their imperialist calculations. But they were opposed by the program of the democratic resolution of all international questions, put forward by the Soviet Union in strict accordance with the liberation goals of the struggle against fascism and supported by the peoples of the whole world.

It was this noble program that formed the basis for the decisions of the Teheran, Crimean, and Potsdam conferences of the leaders of the three great powers—the USSR, Britain, and the USA. It provided for the complete defeat of fascism, the democratization of Germany, Italy, and Japan, as well as their satellites, the granting of freedom and independence to all peoples, the right to choose the form of government, the preservation and development of international cooperation between the states of the anti-Hitler coalition. Such measures opened up the prospect of victory in the war and subsequent peaceful development for all countries of our planet.

The anti-Hitler coalition of peoples and states that took shape and strengthened during the armed struggle included countries with different socio-political systems, which influenced the political goals of the war, the nature and extent of the participation of states and peoples in it.

Historically proven and indisputable is the fact that the Soviet Union withstood the brunt of the war and made the greatest contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany and its accomplices.

II

Faithful to the precepts of V. I. Lenin, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has always reckoned with the threat of imperialist invasion and has shown tireless concern for strengthening the economic, moral, political and defense might of the Soviet state. The Second World War showed the historical correctness of the Leninist policy of the party, under whose leadership, by the will and energy of the people, the country, lagging behind the more developed by 50-100 years, was transformed into a mighty socialist power in a relatively short period of time.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government took into account the possibility of an attack by fascist Germany on the USSR. The tasks of further strengthening the defense of the country were deeply substantiated by the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and enshrined in laws adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The 18th Conference of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, held in February 1941, considered specific questions of developing defense production, and increasing the combat readiness of the Soviet Army and Navy.

The additional twenty-two peaceful months wrested from the reactionary forces as a result of the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact were used for economic development and for strengthening the military might of the socialist state.

Implementing the decisions of the 18th Congress and the 18th Party Conference, the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), relying on the victory of socialism in the USSR, carried out work of enormous scale and importance in preparing the country for defense in the event of an enemy attack. The Party and the government prepared large production facilities for the development of military production and actively organized the development of new, highly advanced models of military equipment and weapons. The transfer of part of the country's productive forces to the East was of great importance.

The Armed Forces developed and improved, they were relocated to the western borders of the USSR. The party educated Soviet people in the spirit of hatred for fascism and patriotic readiness to defend their socialist Fatherland. The party aroused in the Soviet people a sense of national pride in the great accomplishments of socialism and its leading role in the world revolutionary process, a sense of personal responsibility for the fate of socialism that had triumphed in the country. Thus, under the beneficial influence of communist ideas, those sources of mass heroism of the Soviet people developed, which so majestically manifested themselves during the Great Patriotic War.

If, ideologically and politically, the Soviet people met the war in full patriotic readiness, then by no means all the planned measures to strengthen the country's defense were carried out: the time period for this was too short. The miscalculations made in assessing the possible time of an attack on the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany, and the omissions in preparing to repel the first enemy strikes, also played their role.

And yet, blinded by anti-communism, the fascist rulers, taking the fateful decision for Germany to attack the USSR, underestimated the economic, moral-political, and military power of the socialist state, the inexhaustible possibilities inherent in the socialist state and social system. In the future, such an adventurous policy and military strategy would inevitably lead to the collapse of Hitler's aggression, the collapse of the "Third Reich" that seemed invincible. The miscalculation of the entire world imperialist reaction consisted in underestimating the possibilities of the socialist state.

In Germany's attack on the USSR, the class, extremely reactionary, imperialist nature of the war on the part of the fascist bloc was especially clearly manifested. German imperialism set itself the goal of liquidating the outpost of socialism on the globe, seizing the lands and national wealth of the Soviet people, establishing the dictatorship of the German landlords and capitalists in our country, and turning its people into slaves, liquidating the national statehood of the peoples of the USSR, and dividing them, destroying the socialist gains of the working people, their original national culture

and open the way to world domination. Aggression against the Soviet people, grave crimes of the German fascist military were meticulously planned in advance by the German government and the General Staff.

At stake was not only the independence of our Motherland, but also the prospects for world socialism, the fate of all mankind, the honor and freedom of the peoples of the earth. The forced entry of the USSR into the war meant that out of the many contradictions intertwined in the international arena, the struggle between the two social systems firmly came to the fore, taking on the character of an armed clash between German imperialism and the people who had built socialism. This contradiction determined the uncompromising nature of the armed struggle, the decisive importance of the Soviet-German front, on which the outcome of the entire world war depended, and, consequently, the general direction of world historical development.

For the USA and Great Britain, the contradictions with Germany and Japan were of a different social nature and therefore were not so irreconcilable, leaving an opportunity for agreements with the ruling circles of the countries of the fascist bloc, primarily at the expense of the USSR. The difference in the socio-political system of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition also predetermined the unequal degree of mobilization of forces for the needs of the war, the unequal political, strategic goals of the armed struggle and the possibilities of military efforts.

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union was the war of the country of victorious socialism against the shock forces of international reaction. It was a heroic struggle consistently combining patriotism and proletarian internationalism for the fate of socialism and strengthening the basis of the world revolutionary process, in defense of social progress and human civilization. The goals of the Great Patriotic War were exceptionally humane and close to the peoples of all countries. They boiled down to defending the very existence of the socialist Fatherland from the enemy, to defeat the fascist invaders and to carry out the great mission of liberating enslaved Europe, including Germany, from the fascist

obscurantists, to provide the peoples with the opportunity to decide for themselves the issues of state and socio-economic structure.

The further the terrible events of the war go into the past, the more obvious the fact becomes that no other country, having found itself in the position of the Soviet Union, would have withstood such difficult trials. Only the heroic Soviet people, which, under the leadership of the Communist Party, carried out the Great October Socialist Revolution, won the war against the White Guards and foreign interventionists, overcame devastation, built socialism surrounded by hostile capitalist elements, could stand as an indestructible wall in the way of the German fascist aspirants to world domination, and then crush their armed forces.

The socialist mode of production, the planned nature of the national economy and the scientific nature of its management, the might of the Soviet state, the leading role of the Communist Party, the socio-political and ideological cohesion of all classes and nations of society — these are the objective foundations that predetermined the decisive contribution of the USSR to the defeat of the enemy. . The Soviet people not only defended their socialist gains with honor, but also saved world civilization from fascist barbarism, thereby giving powerful support to the liberation struggle of the peoples.

At the head of the Soviet Union, which fought against fascist Germany, was the Leninist Party, the militant vanguard of the working class and the entire Soviet people. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, realizing its historical responsibility for the fate of the people and the state, for the cause of socialism, showed wisdom and great courage in overcoming the colossal difficulties caused by the war, mobilized all the material and intellectual forces of society, inspired, and organized the Soviet people to defeat the enemy and winning a complete victory. The solidarity of the entire people under the banner of the Communist Party is one of the main sources of the invincibility of the socialist power, the most important condition for its decisive contribution to the defeat of the enemy.

The Soviet Army played a major role in the armed struggle against the Nazi Wehrmacht. Our Armed Forces are part of the Soviet people; they rely on the material, political, social, and spiritual might of the socialist state created by him, embody the achievements of advanced Soviet military science, the foundations of which were laid by V. I. Lenin. Domestic weapons and equipment were continuously improved. During the war, Soviet strategy, operational art, and tactics developed. In the Armed Forces, scientific work was constantly carried out to study and generalize the experience of the war. The most important condition for the rapid creative development of military art was the patriotic upsurge of the entire personnel of the army, aviation, and navy, their activity, combat skill, and readiness to relentlessly smash the hated enemy.

At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Army and all the people had to experience the bitterness of failure. The Armed Forces of the USSR were forced to fight in the most unfavorable, most difficult conditions, when material superiority was on the side of the enemy, who also enjoyed the element of surprise in his treacherous attack.

Later in the course of the war, the superiority of the Soviet military strategy affected. Strategic defense was skillfully used to wear down and bleed large enemy groupings, gain time to create and bring up reserves, and prepare the conditions for launching a powerful offensive. The offensive operations of the Soviet troops were distinguished by their thoughtfulness, taking into account the real situation, and extensive use of the advantages of the socialist system and its military organization. These operations were characterized by a huge spatial scope, [XVII] innovation, maneuver to encircle large enemy groupings. The operational plans of the Soviet command combined decisive action with a skillful choice of the directions of the main attacks and the corresponding massing of forces and means.

The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command developed and conducted major strategic operations on the war fronts. Its activities proceeded under the leadership of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the

State Defense Committee, which was chaired by the secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR I. V. Stalin. In planning and carrying out operations, the Headquarters relied on the General Staff and the command of the fronts. It promptly worked out and adopted operational-strategic decisions that best suited its main political goals at one stage or another of the war, created and skillfully used strategic reserves, which made it possible to successfully influence the course and development of events, the general military-political situation and change it in favor of Soviet army.

In the prewar years, and especially during the war, Soviet generals grew up, displaying their knowledge and talent in all their brilliance. Under their leadership, many commanders went through the school of military affairs, who demonstrated the ability to control troops in difficult combat conditions, to generalize combat experience and draw lessons from it for the further development of military art. The Armed Forces had a remarkable cadre of political workers, among whom were prominent figures of the party and the state. By multiplying the military traditions and the glory of Soviet weapons, the commanding and political cadres ensured the successful preparation and conduct of operations to defeat the enemy.

A significant contribution to the victory was made by the Soviet partisans and the party underground in the territory occupied by the enemy, where a nationwide struggle against the invaders unfolded.

Combat operations were dynamic. Military operations were influenced by the level of technical equipment of the branches of the armed forces and combat arms, the degree of their motorization, the development of the most effective strike forces and means, and their firepower. During the war years, the then-nascent jet and radar technology was first used.

The peoples and armies of not only the European continent, but also Great Britain, the United States of America and China took part in the struggle against the Nazi invaders and the Japanese militarists. In these armies, the advanced forces of the nation fought actively:

workers, peasants, and intellectuals; communists, social democrats, and representatives of other mass organizations of workers. Among the political and military leaders of the countries allied with the USSR, there were many who sincerely strove for genuine cooperation with the Soviet state, selflessly fought against a common enemy.

However, for the capitalist states that were part of the anti-Hitler coalition, the war did not mean the elimination of the antagonisms inherent in the exploiting system. V. I. Lenin wrote that “both in wartime, and in war, and in a military way, class contradictions that tear people apart continue to exist and will manifest themselves” {8}

The bourgeois governments of the countries participating in the anti-Hitler coalition throughout the war were not sufficiently loyal to the socialist state, which became their ally. The second front in Europe was opened only in June 1944, when it became absolutely obvious that the Soviet Union, having won decisive victories on the Eastern, the main front of the world war, was able, together with the fighters of the Resistance movement, to complete the defeat of fascist Germany and liberate all of Europe.

The landing of Anglo-American troops in Normandy had a certain positive significance: the troops of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition finally stood up together against a common enemy, Germany was squeezed into the vise of two fronts, and its defeat was accelerated.

But even when the second front was created, the main burden of the war still lay on the USSR. The ruling circles of the United States and Britain, opening a second front, sought not only to take part in achieving victory over Germany, but also to strengthen their class positions in Europe, to achieve goals that did not correspond to the liberating nature of the war, but were aimed at asserting the shattered dominance of financial and the industrial exploiting elite, to win a stronger position at the table of future conferences on post-war settlement in Europe and beyond.

The divergence between the policy of the United States and Britain and the liberation character of the Second World War was particularly acute in the military operations in North Africa and then in the Pacific. The offensive of the Anglo-American troops against Japan was carried out in such a way that its domination over the colonial peoples would pass into the hands of the United States and Britain. At the beginning of August 1945, the American ruling circles committed a monstrous atrocity - atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This criminal act was aimed at intimidating the peoples of the world, primarily the Soviet Union; its goal was to open the way for the US to world domination based on monopoly possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Heroically fought against the Nazi troops during the Second World War, the people's liberation armies of Yugoslavia and Albania, the troops of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and at the final stage of the war, the armies of Bulgaria and Romania. In battles, the military commonwealth of the armies of these countries with the Soviet Armed Forces became stronger.

Members of the resistance movement waged a tense courageous struggle against the invaders, which, engulfing the deep rear of the occupying troops, significantly weakened the combat capabilities of the Wehrmacht. The leading national forces, led by the working class and its militant vanguard, the communist parties, took part in this movement.

The Communists gave the patriots a clear perspective and an inspiring program of not only national but also social liberation. They were among the participants in the resistance movement the most fearless and selfless fighters against the enslavers.

The German, Japanese, and Italian patriots, who were in the deep underground, and above all the Communists, bravely resisted the policy of the ruling circles of their countries. The Chinese people waged a heroic struggle against Japanese imperialism, relying on the friendly support of the working people of the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic. The peoples of Korea, Vietnam and

other Asian countries also joined the national liberation war in the Far East.

The attempts of Anglo-American and West German reactionary historiography to belittle the role of the Soviet Union in winning victory are explained by certain social-class and political considerations, bourgeois nationalism, the desire to raise the prestige of their countries, to obscure the facts of the frequent inactivity of the US and British troops during the decisive battles of World War II. An objective assessment of the decisive role of the Armed Forces of the USSR in defeating the enemy means recognizing the strength and invincibility of the socialist system. In an attempt to belittle the contribution of the USSR to the defeat of Hitlerism, the bourgeoisie seeks to hide from the masses the truth about the enormous vitality of socialism, to cast doubt on its defensive might, and thereby encourage those imperialist circles who are still thinking about a third world war.

The recognition of the fact that the defeat of the aggressive bloc of states headed by fascist Germany and imperialist Japan in the Second World War was not accidental, but natural, is of great importance. The storm awakened by the instigators of the Second World War turned into a hurricane that swept away the war machine of the fascist aggressors and their political regimes.

The experience of the struggle between the two systems during the Second World War showed that socialism is capable of defeating the most reactionary forces of imperialism and thus hastening social development and revolutionary changes. But this objective result of the victory of the freedom-loving peoples came at a high price. Marxist-Leninists never regarded a world war as an indispensable condition for the revolutionary reorganization of society on socialist lines.

The world-historical victory of the freedom-loving peoples in the Second World War is not only a glorious past. It is in organic connection with the contemporary struggle waged by the peoples against the omnipotence of the monopolies and imperialist violence,

for peace, democracy and socialism, a struggle of vital importance to all the peoples of the world.

Sacred is the memory of those who, with the greatest effort of all their strength, fought for the liberation of people from fascism, went to death for the sake of life on earth.

And as a symbol of the unrequited debt of all those living to the fallen soldiers in the capitals and cities of many countries of the world, the Eternal Flame burns on the grave of the Unknown Soldier, whose feat is immortal. This is a reflection of that spiritual warmth that all honest people of the land of blessed memory of freedom fighters give.

The victory in the Second World War naturally led to fundamental changes in the balance of world forces and had a significant impact on the further development of world history.

The Second World War ended with the complete collapse of the plans for the conquest of world domination, which were put forward by German and Japanese imperialism, showing the impracticability of such plans in modern conditions. It did not stop the progressive course of history, the progressive forces achieved victory. Thus, once again, in the most difficult days for mankind, when a mortal threat hung over it, the great historical significance of the October Socialist Revolution and the victory of socialism in the USSR, which deprived imperialism of its former opportunity to dispose of the destinies of peoples and states at its own discretion, was revealed with renewed vigor. The objective result of the Second World War acquired an anti-imperialist orientation. The results and instructive lessons of the war serve as a stern warning to all the aggressive forces of imperialism.

The victory over fascism vividly confirmed the decisive role of the popular masses in public life, their greatest will and heroism, and their moral superiority over world reaction. All post-war world development shows that only a progressive, revolutionary class, the working class, is capable of solving those social tasks that correspond to the progressive course of history, to social progress as

a whole. At the same time, it became even more obvious that the monopoly bourgeoisie had lost its historical perspective.

The main and decisive result of the Second World War was the most convincing proof that there are no forces in the world capable of crushing socialism. In a gigantic military clash with fascism, the Soviet social and state system, the socialist economy, and the advanced Marxist-Leninist ideology won.

The victory over the shock forces of world reaction has inflicted irreparable damage on imperialism. It marked a new important stage in the historical movement of mankind from the old, obsolete capitalism to a new, socialist system, to which the future belongs. The results of the struggle against fascism have shown that socialism is becoming the leading force in international development, that the progress of mankind and the future of peoples, their very existence, depends on it. In close cooperation with the peoples fighting against the invaders, the Soviet Army liberated a number of countries in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, [XXI] as well as East Asia. Other countries gained their freedom in a stubborn national liberation struggle that developed successfully in direct connection with the defeat of the main forces of the fascist bloc by the troops of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The Second World War had a huge impact on the consciousness of people. It was a school for teaching the masses about politics and contributed to their involvement in active political life both nationally and internationally. The whole world saw that imperialism does not abhor any crimes, is deeply hostile to the working people and brings them torment and suffering, up to and including slavery and physical extermination. At the same time, the war proved even more forcefully that under modern conditions only socialism can ensure national and social liberation, peace, and genuine prosperity for the peoples. It is quite natural, therefore, that the working people of the countries of Europe and Asia, in the course of the anti-fascist struggle, sought to radically change their conditions of life, break with imperialism and colonialism, and switch to the path of revolutionary democratic and socialist development.

The victorious offensive of the Soviet Army in 1944-1945. organically merged with the struggle of the peoples of Europe for fundamental socio-economic and political changes, with the anti-fascist struggle of broad sections of the population led by the communists. As a result, people's democratic and socialist revolutions won in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Albania. Soon the revolution won in East Germany, where the German Democratic Republic was then created by the will of the people.

The revolutionary process developed in Italy, France, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Greece. However, the presence of British and American troops on the territory of these states helped the big bourgeoisie to maintain its positions, strengthened the power of monopoly capital, and prevented profound progressive transformations.

Major historical shifts were taking place in the countries of Asia, where new socialist countries were formed - the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The intervention of the imperialists led to the fact that Vietnam and Korea were divided. Until 1949, the people of China waged a civil war that ended in victory and the formation of the People's Republic of China.

Socialism as a new social system, represented before the war only by the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic, stepped over the previous geographical boundaries and firmly established itself on the world stage, increasingly strengthening its position in competition with capitalism. Subsequently, already in the changed international situation, Cuba was the first of the countries of the Western Hemisphere to embark on the socialist path of development.

The formation of the world socialist system was the most important, truly world-historical event after the Great October Socialist Revolution. It was a natural consequence of the defeat [XXII] of fascism in the Second World War, evidence of the great triumph of socialism over imperialism. The results of the Second World War

convincingly showed that imperialism is powerless to regain the monopoly it lost in October 1917 in resolving international issues and in determining the prospects for the development of world events. The course of world history has confirmed the inevitability of the process of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism.

The victory over the fascist aggressors was not easy for the Soviet people. The most severe and irreparable loss was the death of more than twenty millions of his sons and daughters. The material damage was also enormous. Enemies believed that decades would pass before the Soviet country rose from the ruins and ashes and healed the wounds inflicted by the war. But, having turned their energy and enthusiasm to peaceful construction, our people, under the wise leadership of the Party, in common ranks with the peoples of other socialist countries, advanced with leaps and bounds. The post-war restoration and development of the national economy was a new historical feat of the Soviet people.

The economic successes of the socialist countries are the main driving force behind the world revolutionary process. They are changing the international situation more and more noticeably in favor of socialism.

The national liberation struggle of the peoples during the years of the Second World War engulfed a number of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the post-war period, a mighty tide of national democratic revolutions swept the colonial system of imperialism out of its path—the system of slavery, exploitation, and oppression. In place of the former colonies and semi-colonies, more than 70 independent nation-states arose, some of which now adhere to a socialist orientation.

The Communist and Workers' Parties, which during the war were in the forefront of the anti-fascist liberation movement of the peoples, showed themselves in the post-war period as the most staunch, consistent fighters for national independence and freedom. Their influence on the general population increased. Despite the fact that these parties suffered the greatest losses in the fight against fascism, their numbers and authority steadily increased. The communist and

labor movement has become the most influential political force of our time.

Under the influence of the anti-fascist struggle and the vigorous activity of the communists, a new situation was created among the masses in the international democratic movement. There has been a rapprochement and increased coordination of the forces of socialism and democracy in their struggle to prevent a world war and exclude it from the life of society, against the omnipotence of the monopolies and the rule of imperialism.

The main path of human development is now being determined by the world socialist system, the international working class, and all revolutionary forces.

The defeats and losses suffered by imperialism, the results and lessons of the Second World War were an important factor in the international situation after the war. However, during almost a quarter of a century of the "cold war" imperialism tried to ignore this. In the post-war years, the world has repeatedly found itself on the brink of a worldwide total war. And if it has not become a fact, then it is the result of the increased political, economic, and military might of the USSR and other socialist countries, the active struggle of all peoples against the criminal plans of imperialism. The Warsaw Treaty Organization, which emerged as a counterbalance to the aggressive NATO bloc, united the defense efforts of a number of European socialist countries and became a powerful shield that ensures the security of the peoples.

The socio-political consequences of the Second World War are forever imprinted on the pages of the world history of mankind. And if in the difficult war years the Soviet Union was the bulwark of the struggle of the masses of the people against fascism, then in the post-war period, in close fraternal unity [XXIV] with the socialist countries, it rallies and mobilizes the progressive forces that oppose imperialism, its policy of wars and the enslavement of peoples.

The main editorial committee of the work "History of the Second World War" believes that the scientific periodization of the war should be based on fundamental, qualitative changes in its course, character, and class essence; in politics, which is continued in a different form by the belligerent state; in the military-political situation and armed struggle; in the ratio of military, economic, political, and moral forces of the fighting countries. Such changes are of a multilateral, comprehensive nature in the sense of their interconnection in all theaters of military operations and the connection of military events with political, economic, diplomatic, and ideological events.

Thus, a sharp turn in the course of the Second World War occurred in connection with the attack of Nazi Germany on the USSR. The latter led to a huge expansion of the theater of military operations, fundamental shifts in the very essence of the war against the fascist bloc, strengthening its just, liberation character and the political goals corresponding to it. A mighty material, moral and military force, capable of completely crushing the aggressor and canceling out his plans for world domination, joined the armed struggle against fascism. All this gives grounds to consider the beginning of the Great Patriotic War as the most important milestone in the periodization of the Second World War.

Highlighting the periods of the war, the Main Drafting Commission took into account the fundamental changes in military-strategic plans that took place during the armed struggle in the main and decisive theaters of military operations, the scope and intensity of operations and campaigns, as well as the actual quantitative and qualitative ratio of the forces participating in them. Consideration was given to the solution by states of the tasks of armed struggle and the realization by them of their political goals.

Scientific periodization is based on taking into account the causal relationship and mutual conditioning of phenomena. For example, on the day when fascist Germany attacked Poland, the war had not yet acquired worldwide proportions. Nevertheless, this attack was the beginning of a world war; from that moment, due to the natural interconnection of phenomena, the scale of the war expanded

uncontrollably. That is why the start date of World War II is September 1, 1939 {12} .

Within historical periods, separate stages take place as constituent parts of periods. These stages are characterized by significant changes in the course of hostilities and the military-political situation, [XXV] marking the transition from one component of the period to another; the change of major military campaigns, the transition from strategic defense to the offensive; the significance of the stage for creating the prerequisites for changing political and strategic tasks, preparing the change from one period to another; interaction of events and phenomena of war within the given period.

When determining the stages, the following were also taken into account: the course of restructuring the work of the rear, the successes of the partisan movement and the national liberation struggle of peoples, the creation of new political structures in countries.

The main editorial committee came to the conclusion that it was necessary to single out the pre-war period, during which imperialism was preparing for the Second World War. There are two historical stages in this period. The first stage (until the autumn of 1935) is characterized by the collapse of the Versailles-Washington system of peace treaties, the birth of the Second World War, the formation of its centers, the preparation of the fascist states for a world war, and extensive assistance to them from the American, British, and French monopolies. The second stage (autumn 1935 - August 1939) is characterized by the transition of European fascism to open aggression, the formation of a fascist military bloc, the Munich betrayal of the interests of the world, and the pre-war political crisis. Throughout the entire pre-war period, the aggressive plans of imperialism were opposed by the peace-loving policy of the Soviet state, which fought to prevent war and provide a collective rebuff to aggression. In pursuing this policy, the Soviet Union relied on its increased defensive might, which the imperialists could not ignore.

During the **Second World War**, five periods are clearly distinguished.

The first period (September 1939 - June 1941) - the beginning of the war and the invasion of German troops into the countries of Western Europe.

The second period (June 1941 - November 1942) - the attack of fascist Germany on the USSR, the expansion of the scale of the war, the collapse of the Hitlerite doctrine of blitzkrieg and the myth of the invincibility of the German army.

The third period (November 1942 - December 1943) was a radical turning point in the course of the entire Second World War, the collapse of the offensive strategy of the fascist bloc.

The fourth period (January 1944 - May 1945) - the defeat of the fascist bloc, the expulsion of enemy troops from the USSR, the creation of a second front, the liberation of the countries of Europe from the occupation, the complete collapse of Germany and its unconditional surrender.

The fifth period (May - September 1945) - the defeat of imperialist Japan, the liberation of the peoples of Asia from Japanese occupation and the end of the Second World War.

Taking into account the objective course of events, the Main Editorial Commission determined the division of the volumes of the History of the Second World War in the following way.

The first volume covers the period from the end of the First World War to the autumn of 1935. Its first part is devoted to the origin of war in the system [XXVI] of world imperialism, showing fascism as a striking force of imperialism and militarism, and the history of the emergence of the first centers of a new world war. The second part of the volume reveals the world-historical significance of the construction of socialism in the USSR, the development of its Armed Forces, the intense struggle of the peace-loving peoples, led by the Soviet Union, against the danger of a new world war.

The second volume is devoted to the events connected with the immediate preparation of the second world war by the imperialist states, the transition of European fascism to open armed aggression, and the exposure of the policy of condoning the aggressors on the part of Britain, France, and the United States. The volume highlights the struggle of the Soviet Union and other progressive forces against fascism and the threat of war.

The third volume examines military operations in Europe, the direct preparation of fascist Germany for an attack on the USSR and the preparation of the Soviet Union to repel aggression.

The fourth volume is devoted to the political and military events associated with the expansion of the scale of the war as a result of Germany's treacherous attack on the Soviet Union and Japan's aggression against the United States and England. The volume examines the beginning of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people, the disruption of Hitler's plan of "blitzkrieg", the victory of the Soviet Armed Forces in the winter of 1941/42, the process of forming an anti-fascist coalition and the activities of communist parties to mobilize the masses to fight against fascism.

The fifth volume examines military operations in the summer and autumn of 1942, during which the efforts of the Soviet people frustrated the plans of Nazi Germany to crush the USSR this year and expand the front of aggression in the countries of the Near and Middle East, and also prepared the conditions for a radical change in World War II .

The sixth volume covers the events of the most important stage of the past war, when a radical change began and grew in favor of the anti-Hitler coalition. The volume shows the decisive role of the USSR and its Armed Forces in creating this turning point.

The seventh volume is devoted to the study of the military, political and economic processes that determined the completion of the radical turning point in the war, showing the decisive role of the USSR in this turning point and the beginning of the collapse of the fascist bloc.

The eighth volume examines the events of the first half of 1944, as a result of which Nazi Germany's plans to prolong the war by stabilizing the Soviet-German front were frustrated. The activities of the allies in preparation for the opening of a second front in Europe are covered.

The ninth volume examines the major victories of the Soviet Armed Forces, which led to the complete expulsion of the fascist aggressors from Soviet territory and the liberation of the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The volume covers the events connected with the opening of the second front by the allies, military operations in the Pacific Ocean and in Asia. [XXVII]

The tenth volume is dedicated to the final victories of the Soviet Armed Forces and the allied forces over the Nazi army, which led to the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, to the disclosure of the leading role of the Soviet Union in decision-making at conferences in Yalta, Potsdam, and San Francisco on the post-war order of the world.

The eleventh volume reveals the aggressive policy of Japanese militarism, the defeat and unconditional surrender of Japan, exposes the reactionary essence of the US nuclear strategy, and shows the liberation mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Far East.

The twelfth volume analyzes the military, economic, political, and ideological factors that determined the course and outcome of the Second World War, gives theoretical and practical conclusions from the history of the war, reveals the fundamental changes in the balance of power in the world after the Second World War.

The multi-volume work is being prepared by the Institute of Military History of the USSR Ministry of Defense jointly with the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Institutes of General History and the History of the USSR of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In accordance with the multilateral complex nature of the work, representatives of various specialties are involved in the work on it - historians, economists, philosophers, sociologists, lawyers, statisticians. Prominent military leaders, party, Soviet and diplomatic workers take an active part in

the preparation of labor. The authors of the work are faced with the task of objectively highlighting the history of the Second World War, exploring its problems on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology and methodology, from the standpoint of a materialistic understanding of history.

The main editorial committee and the entire team of authors hope that their collective work will help to better understand the complex processes of the Second World War, to appreciate the unprecedented struggle of freedom-loving peoples against the reactionary forces of imperialism and militarism and the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union to the achievement of a world-historic victory, to extract the necessary lessons in the name of the triumph of progress and peace on Earth.

Introduction

The history of imperialism irrefutably testifies that all major wars were prepared by it in deep secrecy from the peoples. World War II is no exception to this rule. It originated in the depths of the capitalist system long before the peoples of the world actually felt its immediate approach.

The works of V. I. Lenin are of inestimable importance for the analysis of the history of the origin of the Second World War. Investigating the history of the outbreak of the First World War, V. I. Lenin comprehensively and convincingly proved that it was generated by the entire system of European capitalist states. In order to understand, he emphasized, how the First World War inevitably and steadily flowed out of this system, one must take the entire policy of this entire system, study and understand it in its entirety "... for a number of decades before the war ..." {13} .

The process of maturing the Second World War in the bowels of capitalism took about twenty years. And only after a comprehensive analysis of the policy of all the great powers during these two pre-war decades can one expose the deepest roots of the war, make sure that it was not an accident, but was a natural product of the imperialist system, that it began to emerge long before its first volleys thundered.

The first years after the war 1914-1918, the victorious capitalist powers were busy redistributing colonies and spheres of influence, redrawing the borders of many states at the expense of the defeated. But at the same time, the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution meant a decisive social defeat for the entire capitalist world.

The ruling circles of defeated Germany, as well as Italy and Japan, ranked among the winners, were not satisfied with the division of booty organized by the rulers of the USA, England, and France. The monopolists of Germany, Italy, and Japan, even in the course of the war, were thinking about a new redistribution of the globe; The USA, Britain and France sought to maintain and expand their

dominance in the bourgeois world by weakening Germany, Italy, and Japan.

The confrontation in the capitalist world intensified; the general crisis of capitalism deepened. Along with the factors that divided the imperialists, there were also factors that united them: hatred of the USSR, the desire to destroy the socialist system. [4]

The hatred of world reaction for the socialist state manifested itself in the sharpest form in the military intervention against Soviet Russia. Even after the victory of the Soviet people over their enemies, they did not abandon their plans. At the same time, the contradictions between the capitalist powers escalated. All this led to the fact that the danger of a big new war began to grow immediately after the end of the First World War. In March 1921, the Tenth Congress of the RCP(b) adopted a resolution "On the coming imperialist war." It said: "The Congress considers it necessary that the proletariat should be told that the bourgeoisie is again preparing for a grandiose attempt to deceive the workers, incite national hatred in them and drag the peoples of America, Asia and Europe into the greatest slaughter, and after this, inevitably, the rest of the world. » {14}.

As the contradictions in the capitalist world sharpen, the process of the birth of a new world war becomes more and more visible. Already at the conference in Locarno (1925), the foundation was laid for the anti-Soviet bloc of England, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The XIV Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks assessed the results of the conference as extremely dangerous for the cause of peace {15} . The conspiracy at Locarno cast a dark shadow over the subsequent course of events.

Thus the Second World War was born. The objective course of the historical process shows that the prehistory of the war includes two main stages. At the first stage, until the autumn of 1935, the alignment of forces in the capitalist world was taking shape for the struggle for world domination, and hotbeds of world war arose. The most ominous event of this stage was the fascist coup in Germany

and its subsequent rapid preparation for war. This coup introduced profound changes in the entire international situation, especially when the process of rearmament in Germany began, which included the creation of the Wehrmacht, the militarization of the economy and the entire spiritual life of the country. The second stage, from the autumn of 1935, is characterized by the transition of European fascism to open aggression.

With the formation of two centers of a new world war, the alignment of forces with which the bourgeois world entered into a military battle four years later was quite clearly formed.

Two centers of a new world war arose in the first half of the 1930s. The first - in 1931-1932. as a result of the invasion of the troops of militaristic Japan in the northeastern provinces of China (Manchuria). This local military conflict was fraught with the danger of Japan's big war against China and, to no lesser extent, against the Soviet Union, as well as against the United States and England. The second focus arose in 1933-1935. in connection with the fascist coup in Germany and the widespread preparations in the country for a world war, which the German monopolists were going to undertake both against the Western powers and against the USSR.

In order for the centers of war to be fully determined, in addition to the actions of the Japanese and German imperialists, appropriate international conditions were needed. They were created by the policy of condoning and encouraging the aggressive aspirations of the German and Japanese militarists, pursued by the ruling circles of the USA, Britain, and France. The statesmen of these countries considered German and Japanese monopoly capital, their military might, as a striking force capable of crushing the USSR and thereby resolving [5] the main contradiction of the modern era - between the two social systems - in favor of capitalism. These figures contributed to creating the conditions for German, Italian and Japanese militarism to move towards a world war.

The leaders of the right-wing socialists threw combustible material into the outbreaks of the world military conflagration. Against the will of the majority of the members of their parties, they refused to

fight jointly with the communists against the danger of war. The British right-wing Laborites supported the government's course, calculated on the revival of militaristic Germany and its pushing towards war with the Soviet Union. The leaders of the German Social Democrats rejected the proposal of the Communists to unite the efforts of the working class to stop fascism at home. The French right-wing socialists were in many ways in solidarity with the Labor leaders.

The aggressive policy of imperialism was opposed by a powerful class force in the form of the Land of Soviets, which fought firmly and consistently against fascism and war. In close unity with the Soviet Union, the communist parties of the capitalist countries advocated for peace. The left socialists, fighters for national freedom and independence, foreign mass organizations of workers - trade unions, youth, associations of the intelligentsia, supporters of peace also fought for peace.

Relying on the working class and the democratic strata of the population, the communist and workers' parties of the capitalist countries fought against the anti-people policy of the monopolies and bourgeois states, exerted serious pressure on the reactionary governments in order to prevent war and curb fascism. The anti-war activities of the communist parties were directed by the III, Communist International {16} militant international organization of the working class. By uniting the proletarian parties of different countries, he rallied the social forces that opposed fascism, and warned the working people about the real threat of a world war. In the summer of 1935, at the 7th Congress of the Comintern, a historic decision was made on the unity of action of the working class against fascism and the danger of war, and the idea of creating a broad anti-fascist popular front based on proletarian solidarity was put forward. The Comintern tirelessly called on the working people to mobilize progressive forces to help countries fight for their independence against aggression and imperialist oppression.

Of great importance in the struggle for peace were the coordinated actions of the communists with other political parties, their ability to unite the healthy forces of the nation, to carry out a policy of

rebuffing the impending war, to achieve unity of views on fundamental questions of the organization and tactics of the anti-fascist movement. Acting as the leading party in the Comintern, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) put forward on a principled basis flexible and dynamic forms of cooperation with other parties and organizations, showed the international communist and workers' movement an example of the struggle for the unity of all anti-fascist forces. [6]

Despite the monstrous terror of the reactionary ruling circles and the huge losses of the communists caused by it, the communist parties of Germany, Italy and Japan waged a selfless anti-fascist struggle in the deep underground. They explained to the masses the full danger of war and called on them to actively fight against militarism and aggression.

The inconsistency and complexity of the international situation and the internal and external conditions of development of the colonial and dependent countries of Asia and Africa caused a variety of forms of participation of their peoples in the struggle to prevent a world war. Some of these countries, long before the war became a world war, turned into a field of armed struggle against fascism and militarism, others, chained to the chariot of Anglo-French colonialism, followed the path of their mother countries, and still others stood aside from the emerging war. The development of the anti-fascist movement, its scope and intensity in these countries depended on the maturity of the social forces capable of leading the anti-imperialist struggle.

By united actions of all the supporters of peace, relying on the moral and material might of the Soviet state and its Armed Forces, in the presence of a system of collective rebuffing of fascist aggression in Europe, it was possible to delay the outbreak of the Second World War for a long time, and perhaps even prevent it from arising at all. But the Soviet Union was in the circle of imperialist states hostile to it, all the time under the threat of the creation of a united front of both emerging capitalist coalitions. The avalanche of brutal reprisals unleashed by the reactionary forces of a number of capitalist countries on the working class, its parties and other mass

organizations led to the fact that hundreds of thousands of communists, trade unionists, peace activists, anti-fascist fighters were destroyed, driven into concentration camps, or were forced to act in difficult underground conditions.

Despite the fact that the social forces that opposed the war failed to prevent the birth and development of its centers, their efforts and sacrifices were not in vain and created certain prerequisites for the mobilization of freedom-loving peoples in the future for a just war against fascism.

Aggressiveness of imperialism

1. The capitalist system after the first world war

The first imperialist world war arose as a result of a long development of the contradictions of the capitalist system. It was born by it, grown, and matured within it. The war was the sharpest manifestation of imperialist contradictions, a crisis of capitalism.

"The European war," wrote V. I. Lenin, "is a tremendous historical crisis, the beginning of a new epoch. Like any crisis, the war has aggravated deep-seated antagonisms and brought them to the surface, tearing asunder all veils of hypocrisy, rejecting all conventions, and deflating all corrupt or rotting authorities." {17} . Capitalism, which had trampled many peoples into the bloody mess of world war, was entering a new stage in its development—a general crisis.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution opened a new era in world history. The content of this era is the transition of mankind from capitalism, which has ceased to be an all-encompassing world system, to socialism.

Under conditions of a general crisis, capitalism became even more aggressive. Along with the further development of its internal contradictions, a new contradiction also arose - between two opposite social systems, which became the main contradiction of the new historical era. The hostility inherent in capitalism to the fundamental interests of the masses has deepened.

The First World War had not yet ended, when a new world war gradually began to emerge in the depths of capitalism. It was an internal, spontaneous process.

Imperialism in its economic essence is monopoly capitalism. During the war years, the might of the monopolies and banks combined with the state machinery of the capitalist countries protecting their class interests, and a single mechanism of oppression, exploitation, extreme reaction, and aggression arose. Capitalism became state-monopoly. The capitalist states, being on guard of the selfish interests of the financial oligarchy, in the name of the profits of the

monopolies, were not going to stop before any measures of class terror, any acts of violence, expansion, aggression. [7]

After the war, the capitalist governments completely or partially abandoned those measures of regulating the production and supply of enterprises with raw materials, which were carried out in wartime conditions. However, the system of state-monopoly capitalism continued to develop. The ruling classes explained the intensified exploitation of the working people and militarization in peacetime by the "need" to overcome the consequences of the world war, economic crises, and far-fetched threats from outside.

Under the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution, as a result of the general upsurge of the class struggle of the workers against the oppression and arbitrariness of the monopolies, a revolutionary wave swept over the world. The prophecy of F. Engels came true: the crowns rolled along the pavements. The peoples swept away the German and Austro-Hungarian monarchies, bourgeois republics arose in their place, and the national self-determination of the peoples of Austria-Hungary took place. But the republican form, which provided some opportunities for the activity of progressive political organizations and parties, was only a form of economic and political domination by the monopoly bourgeoisie. A typical example of such capitalism was post-war Germany, about which V. I. Lenin wrote: "Here we have the" last word "of modern large-scale capitalist technology and systematic organization, subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism" {18} .

The democratic forms that the bourgeois dictatorship in many countries acquired immediately after the war did not at all preclude the use of terrorist measures by capitalist governments against those who did not wish to put up with the arbitrariness and oppression of the monopolies. Behind the façade of the "democratic way of life" were the extremes of the dictatorship. Bloody reprisals against the discontented became commonplace in a number of capitalist countries, including Germany during the Weimar Republic {19}.

The ever-widening use of military-police terror by the capitalist governments, the intensification of reaction along all lines, posed a

new menacing danger to mankind. The very nature of state-monopoly capitalism gave rise to tendencies towards the development of ultra-right parties and organizations, towards authoritarian regimes and dictatorships, including fascist ones. The threat of war was constant. The experience of history teaches that he who takes up arms against his own people will, at the first opportunity, use it with the greatest readiness against other peoples.

The origin of wars by imperialism is determined primarily by underlying economic factors. These include the further development of the process of concentration and centralization of capital, the growth of the economic and political power of the monopolies, their striving for omnipotence not only in their own country, but also abroad. Monopoly capital, by its very nature, strives for unlimited predominance and domination, for international monopoly. Hence the sharpness of the struggle for markets and raw materials, for spheres of investment of capital, and even more so for bringing back those times when capital reigned supreme on the globe, when its omnipotence was not opposed by the socialist system. Exacerbation of uneven development and resulting [8] hence the change in the correlation of forces of the capitalist powers caused a particularly rapid growth of the military danger.

The potential danger of a new world war was engendered by the very nature of imperialism and existed from the first days of that imperialist "peace" that ended the war. Yes, it could not be otherwise - the nature of the "peaceful" device was fully consistent with the nature of the ended war.

The end of the First World Imperialist War was marked in the countries of the capitalist West by bells and gun salutes, solemn divine services and enthusiastic articles by the bourgeois press, unctuous speeches by bourgeois politicians and grandiloquent statements by right-wing socialist leaders. The pacifist organizations, which were persecuted during the days of the war, now have the most favorable opportunities for their activities. Adjusting to the mood of the masses, the heads of the bourgeois governments spoke from pacifist positions. They assured that from now on the end of wars, especially world wars, has come. Such were

the speeches of British Prime Minister D. Lloyd George and US President W. Wilson. And these speeches were made in those days when the interventionist troops were outrageous on Soviet soil, when the imperialist governments made every effort to liquidate the hated Soviet power by force of arms. Waging war and swearing that there will never be another war is a kind of pinnacle of bourgeois hypocrisy.

As for the French Prime Minister J. Clemenceau, who received the nickname "Tiger" for his militancy, he did not hide his aggressive aspirations and said that the peace that followed the First World War "is and cannot but be only a continuation of the war" {20} .

The international communist movement and its leader V. I. Lenin gave a profound scientific analysis of the situation in the world that had taken shape in the post-war years. The Marxists warned that the danger of new wars of conquest had not been eliminated, that a second world war might follow. V. I. Lenin said in 1922: "Reactionary imperialist wars at all ends of the world are inevitable. And forget that tens of millions were killed then and will still be beaten now ... humanity cannot, and it will not forget" {21} .

However, having suffered a defeat in the intervention against the Soviet state, the capitalist governments, preoccupied with dividing up the booty they had received after the First World War, were still only thinking about a future world battle. The development of the contradictions of capitalism in the 1920s proceeded latently, was covered up, just as a stream of red-hot lava is hidden by a cooling crust.

Bourgeois theories appeared that capitalism had entered a new phase of development, excluding world wars, the "era of pacifism". V. I. Lenin noted in 1922 that "pacifist phrases, conversations, and assurances, sometimes even oaths against war and against peace (meaning the Treaty of Versailles. - Ed.) steps, even the simplest, for the security of the world, we meet in most states, and especially in modern civilized states, are unusually few" {22} .

describing the true essence of bourgeois pacifism in the 1920s, the 8th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International

(ECCI) in May 1927 stated in its theses that "in the context of intensified preparations for imperialist wars [9] the talk of bourgeois governments and petty-bourgeois pacifists about disarmament are the greatest hypocrisy and mockery...» {23} .

Already in the 1920s, congresses of the Bolshevik Party warned of the threat of a new world war.

History has convincingly shown the correctness of the communists. Now, based on historical experience, even some bourgeois historians admit that "under the roar of a gun salute, the first world war was buried and the second was conceived" {24} . However, they do not say the main thing: in whose womb did this conception take place? The answer to this question is extremely important, since we are talking about the guilt not of individual criminals, but of the whole social system. Many bourgeois authors seek to whitewash the system of capitalism. The American historian Perkins bluntly states: "...capitalist society is by no means militant by its very nature..." {25} The facts testify that the second world war, like the first, was generated by the system of imperialism and its inherent contradictions. It matured within this system. F. Engels' prediction of the First World War Vladimir Ilyich called brilliant {26}. Equally brilliant was Lenin's foresight of the possibility of a second world war and those main directions in the course of which a world military conflict would be brewing, significantly surpassing the first. "The question of imperialist wars," wrote V. I. Lenin in 1921, "is about that international policy of finance capital that is now dominant throughout the world, which inevitably gives rise to new imperialist wars, inevitably gives rise to an unprecedented intensification of national oppression, exploitation, robbery, the strangulation of weak, backward, small nationalities by a handful of "advanced" powers—this question has since 1914 become the cornerstone of the entire policy of all countries of the globe. It is a matter of life and death for tens of millions of people. This is the question of whether 20 million people will be slaughtered in the next imperialist war, which is being prepared before our eyes by the bourgeoisie, which is growing out of capitalism before our eyes..." {27}

Thunderclouds were gathering over the planet. The First World War ended with an imperialist peace formalized by the treaties of the Versailles-Washington system of the post-war system {28} . Imperialist contradictions, the predatory nature of imperialism, and its inherent striving to eliminate the revolutionary gains of the peoples and to enslave them more and more showed up both in the drafting [10] of the treaties and in their very content. This determined the policy of the largest capitalist states.

In order to carry out their plans, the US ruling circles sent President Wilson to Europe in 1919. Bourgeois and also social democratic propaganda extolled the president, hushing up his true role as the head of the American billionaires. Of course, it was not necessary to expect justice from Wilson, who became "the idol of the philistines and pacifists" {29} .

As the most important instrument of its policy, the United States counted on the League of Nations {30} . The American imperialists hoped to turn it into a world governing body, wholly in their hands, into a permanent political instrument of US foreign policy, into the general headquarters of world reaction, which would perform punitive functions against the workers' and national liberation movement, and also prepare and carry out an anti-Soviet military hike.

The manifesto of the II Congress of the III, Communist International rightly stated that the ruling circles of the USA, with the help of the League of Nations, tried to "attach the peoples of Europe and other parts of the world to their golden chariot, ensuring control over them from Washington. The League of Nations was to become, in essence, the world monopoly firm of Yankees & Co. {31} .

However, the United States of America, which faced resolute resistance from a number of European capitalist governments, failed to seize the leading role in this international organization. This led to a demonstrative refusal of the United States to participate in the League of Nations. The government of the overseas imperialist power limited itself to sending its "observers"—official and unofficial—to its meetings.

The creation of the League of Nations and its activities in the early years had a very definite anti-Soviet orientation. Bourgeois newspapers wrote about this with enthusiasm. One of them stated: "In essence, the League of Nations, when it is formed, will have to deal with Russia and restore order" {32} .

Strengthening during the First World War, the American imperialists began to lay claim to the colonies of their competitors from the European capitalist countries.

The increased unevenness of the economic development of capitalism made the question of the redistribution of the colonial world even more tense. Considering all this, V. I. Lenin said with good reason: "America cannot make peace with the rest of Europe ... because there is a deep economic strife between them, because America is richer than others" {33} .

The antagonistic contradictions between the USA, the Entente {34} and Germany, which caused the bloody First World War, were not eliminated, but only took on other forms, still dangerous for peace in Europe. There was a new conflict between England, France, and the USA - the victorious countries, on the one hand, and defeated Germany, on the other. A number of important circumstances gave this conflict a special urgency.

The first of these circumstances was that even defeated imperialist Germany retained gigantic economic opportunities. It "due to its development and resources remained potentially the most powerful country" in Europe {35}. The uneven development of the bourgeois countries determined Germany's advance in the very near future. The conflict between the alignment of forces of the "great" imperialist powers and the division of colonial possessions between them was not eliminated and in the final analysis inevitably led to a new world war. Even in the first post-war years, the ruling circles of Germany did not want to accept the fact that their political position in the world did not correspond to the economic strength that the country possessed. The German monopolists waged a struggle "for a place in the sun", for world positions and world markets, for the creation of a huge colonial empire so desired by the hearts of

industrialists, bankers and junkers. Even during the First World War, May 16, 1918, in the Dusseldorf "Stalhof" - a gloomy gray stone building in the city center - a meeting of the most influential representatives of the business world (A. Thyssen, G. Stinnes, A. Vogler, E. Kirdorf, A. Hugenberg, P. Klöckner, E. Pensgen and others) was held. The proposals were discussed that "Germany and its allies for a long time carried out a military occupation of communications linking European countries with the North of Russia", and the issue of "development" of Russia, Ukraine and the Limitrophes[36]. The central idea, according to the minutes, was to secure "the deepest possible financial penetration into Russia in order to maintain the political and military superiority of Germany" [37] . All the thoughts of the German monopolists were directed towards revenge, towards regaining the opportunity to take the road of war. Behind their imaginary humility, there was a sharp hatred for the winners and the confidence that the war could be "replayed".

The Versailles system of the imperialist world meant the triumph of the victors over defeated Germany and her allies. It was directed against Soviet Russia and had a counter-revolutionary character, created in the interests of fighting the revolutionary and national liberation movement. It was a system of unprecedented robbery and enslavement of hundreds of millions of people in all parts of the globe. The Versailles system put a number of European countries in an unequal position. The lines of new frontiers established by Versailles ruthlessly shredded the living bodies of the European nations. Redrawing the map of Europe, the imperialists sought to prevent the further spread [12] of the revolutionary fire and strangle Soviet Russia [38]. But they were unable to prevent many important processes that unfolded against their will. Under the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution and as a result of internal factors, a wave of national liberation movements rose high in many states of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Versailles "peacekeepers" had to admit the fact of the formation of a number of new states in Europe, thereby recognizing the success of the national liberation struggle.

On the other hand, using the big bourgeoisie of the young states and the position of the Social Democratic parties, they made every effort

to subjugate these states. Justifying this course, the official memorandum of the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 called the bourgeois governments of the countries bordering Soviet Russia "the last line of defense between Germany, where the influence of Bolshevism continues to grow, and the forces of Lenin in Russia ... the fall of the last barrier between the Russian Bolsheviks and the party of Liebknecht in Germany may lead to the fact that Bolshevism will flood Western Europe, right up to the Rhine, where the Allied troops are stationed " {39}.

In creating an anti-Soviet foothold, the leaders of Britain, the USA, France, and Italy avoided using this term, fearing that it might betray their aggressive intentions. In the documents of the delegations, not intended for publication, one could still meet the words "line of defense", while in the press they spoke of a "protective barrier". Italian Prime Minister Orlando contributed to the search for a suitable term. He was the first to talk about the "cordon sanitaire". And the French Prime Minister Clemenceau declared in the Chamber of Deputies: "We want to place an iron curtain around Bolshevism, which will prevent it from destroying civilized Europe" {40} . Behind this symbolic curtain were concentrated those forces to which imperialism assigned the role of an assault detachment against Soviet Russia.

The imperialists deliberately set the large and small peoples of Europe against each other and tried to incite the states of the continent against Soviet Russia. They cruelly took revenge on the countries in which revolutionary tendencies were most strongly manifested, major revolutionary events took place. The United States, England and France rewarded Italy for her participation in the war on their side with many Slavic lands that were previously part of Austria-Hungary and whose liberation from a foreign yoke was presented as one of the goals of the First World War.

A number of African countries, freed from German domination, immediately found themselves under the no less heavy colonial yoke of the imperialist victors. The possessions of Turkey also became their colonies, and she herself was plundered, and only the national liberation revolution, victorious with the fraternal support

of the Soviet republics, saved the national independence and integrity of this country.

The Washington system of treaties, which entered into force three years after the Versailles one, was also worked out without the participation of the Soviet state, contrary to its interests and against it. The conference participants signed an agreement on the joint defense of their colonial possessions, directed against the national liberation movement and the Soviet state.

The United States and England, in a sharp diplomatic battle with Japan, achieved the liquidation of many important economic and political positions [13] occupied by it in China during the war years and placing it in a servile position. The place of Japan in the robbery of China was in a hurry to be taken by the United States. The Washington system has become a new noose thrown by the imperialist enslavers around the neck of the long-suffering Chinese people. In all the issues discussed during the creation of this system, the deepest imperialist contradictions affected: Japanese-American, Anglo-Japanese, Anglo-American, Franco-Italian, Anglo-French and others.

VI Lenin attached great importance to the conflict between Japan and the United States of America. "If you take two imperialist countries: Japan and America, they want to fight, they will fight for world primacy, for the right to plunder" [41], he said already in December 1920. V. I. Lenin also foresaw a further aggravation of contradictions between America and the rest of the capitalist world, especially between the USA and the countries of capitalist Europe.

The anti-popular predatory goals of the Versailles-Washington system determined its inconsistency and instability, which were aggravated by the rivalry of the imperialist powers. The Versailles-Washington system of the post-war structure was only a temporary consolidation of the redistribution of the capitalist world in favor of the victorious powers. Old conflicts between these powers persisted, and new ones also arose.

But the main difference between the situation after the First World War and the situation preceding this war was that, as a result of the

Great October Socialist Revolution, the era of the omnipotence of capital on the globe ended and a new historical era began - the era of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism and communism. The sphere of domination of the imperialist powers and the possibilities for them to enslave and plunder other peoples were reduced, which inevitably aggravated their mutual struggle.

Along with the deep antagonisms that divided the imperialist states and manifested themselves in their mutual struggle, they also had certain common aspirations, generated by the class hatred of the monopoly bourgeoisie for the USSR, its desire to destroy the socialist state. Without weakening the mutual struggle for world domination, the ruling circles of the capitalist powers tried to come to an agreement among themselves and unite in a united anti-Soviet front. Such a danger was quite real, and if imperialist diplomacy formed such a front, then Soviet socialist diplomacy mobilized all its possibilities and all its skill in order to use the contradictions of imperialism to prevent its creation.

The First World War and the October Revolution marked the beginning of a new general crisis of capitalism. Its main factor was the emergence and successful development of the world's first socialist country. The general crisis of capitalism meant that this social system was on the verge of decline and death, that an inevitable process of disintegration had engulfed capitalism from base to summit: its economic and political system, its politics and ideology. In the capitalist world there were winners and there were losers. But this whole world as a whole suffered a grave defeat. And although imperialism still had great economic and military potentialities, although it imagined itself to be the master of the destinies of peoples and the world, this conceit no longer corresponded to the new situation on the globe that had taken shape after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution.

The Great October had an immeasurable revolutionary influence on the peoples of the capitalist countries and colonies. The victory over the first military action of world imperialism against Soviet Russia showed the entire working people of the planet the ability of the liberated workers and peasants to defend their gains with weapons

in their hands, and the successful building of socialism in the USSR became the main component and powerful driving force of the world revolutionary process.

The new alignment of class forces on the world stage also opened up a new direction in their struggle. The emergence and development of the Soviet socialist state, which became the center of attraction for the entire international revolutionary and national liberation movement, shifted the main axis of world politics and international relations to the plane of the struggle of the old capitalist world with the growing, gaining strength of Soviet socialist society. This fundamental contradiction of the new historical epoch weakened capitalism and deepened all the internal and external contradictions of the world capitalist system.

In the ruling circles of the capitalist countries, there were two main tendencies in relation to the Soviet state. One tendency, represented by the most aggressive imperialist forces, was to destroy Soviet Russia by war at all costs. Its manifestation was the armed intervention against the Soviet republics. This tendency has long prevailed in the higher spheres of England, the United States of America and France.

Class malice clouded the minds of bourgeois politicians who had managed to forget the saving role for their countries played during the First World War by Russia, which they now hate. The British leaders wanted not only to destroy Soviet power, but also to dismember Russia. If they made more cautious speeches in parliament, it was only out of fear of the possible reaction of the masses, whose memory was not so short. The French leaders, realizing that their country always needed a strong ally in the east of Europe, did not share the intention to destroy Russia as a state, although they were also full of hatred for the Soviets, and therefore took the most active part in organizing and carrying out armed intervention.

Another trend in the ruling circles of the capitalist countries testified to a certain prudence and greater foresight of its supporters. Representatives of this tendency, while remaining class-hostile to the

USSR, considered the intention to destroy it by force of arms dangerous and unpromising. They counted on the fact that the restoration of capitalism in our country would be achieved by methods of ideological penetration, diktat, and economic intervention. This trend reflected the views of those circles that were interested in the Soviet market and trade relations with the Soviets.

V. I. Lenin called to distinguish between supporters of one and the other tendencies. Considering the question of the relationship between states of two different social systems as a fundamental one in international politics, the party led by V. I. Lenin vigorously fought to ensure that these relations were based on the principles of peace and developed in an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence.

At the Paris Conference of 1919, when addressing issues of the post-war system, plans for anti-Soviet armed intervention were developed. But the imperialist designs were opposed by the program of a truly democratic peace put forward by the Soviet government, [15] already proclaimed in Lenin's Decree on Peace. This program, as well as the enormous revolutionary impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution on the working people of the entire globe, were the most important factors that, along with others, predetermined the collapse of hopes for the world hegemony of this or that capitalist power.

As the imperialists became convinced that they could not overthrow Soviet power, a new strategic line was taking shape in their policy towards defeated Germany. Its purpose was to establish close cooperation with German imperialism, to assist in the revival of its economic and military forces, to use Germany's reactionary, revanchist, and aggressive aspirations against the Soviet state. This course was already clearly manifested at the Paris Peace Conference. W. Churchill in his memoirs presented the line of the USA, England, and France in relation to Germany as follows: "Three statesmen (we are talking about Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau. - Ed.), busy with the development of the post-war system, and above all with the discussion of the "Russian question", came to the following conclusion: undoubtedly, it is quite possible to conquer Russia materially, but morally this is too important a task to be

carried out by the victors alone. We can carry it out only with the help of Germany. Having drawn this conclusion, the "three statesmen" made the following decision: "Germany must be invited to help us in the liberation of Russia and the restoration of Eastern Europe" {42} .

This is how a plan arose to turn defeated Germany from an enemy in the First World War into an ally of England, the USA and France against the Soviet state. The German imperialists were encouraged by this turn of events. Incidentally, the plan to use Germany as such a counter-revolutionary force was suggested by the German monopolists, bankers and junkers themselves. As early as the end of 1918, V. I. Lenin noted that "German generals and capitalists turn to their allies and tell them: although you have defeated us, do not get too carried away in your experiments on us, because world Bolshevism threatens both you and us, in the fight against which we can be useful to you " {43}. And German imperialism strove to do everything to demonstrate its ability to fulfill its intended role as a strike force in the struggle against world Bolshevism. The anti-Soviet orientation of the policy of the most aggressive circles in Germany sharply intensified, and the reprisals against participants in the workers' revolutionary movement became even more merciless and bloody. However, the plan of the ruling circles of England, the USA and France to use Germany against the socialist state was actively opposed by Soviet foreign policy. Its great success was the conclusion in 1922 of the Soviet-German treaty in Rapallo, which for a number of years became the basis of good neighborly relations between the two countries.

The First World War clearly exposed the aggressive nature of imperialism. The suffering experienced by the masses of the people during the war and in the post-war years, the example of the victorious socialist revolution in Russia convinced them that outside of socialism there can be no salvation from wars, there can be no fundamental changes in the living conditions of the working people.

Despite the cruel measures of the bourgeois governments, huge masses of people on all continents [16] of the globe were drawn into the revolutionary struggle. The development of this process did not

proceed in a straight line. Its steep rise occurred immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution, which was a reflection of its international significance and influence. At this stage, Soviet republics arose in Hungary, Bavaria, Slovakia {44} . The positions of capitalism in Germany were shaken by the November Revolution of 1918. There was no country in the capitalist world that did not experience the influence of the October Revolution. In this situation of a powerful revolutionary upsurge, in March 1919, the Third, Communist International, was created. Its first congress was attended by delegates from 30 countries.

Having betrayed the cause of the working class during the First World War, the leaders of the Second International played the shameful role of saviors of the capitalist system at the new stage of world history, disarmed the proletariat ideologically, paralyzed its will and energy, and its determination to put an end to capitalism forever. The betrayal of the leaders of the Social Democracy, given the weakness of its revolutionary wing, was the main reason why the first revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat in a number of countries (mainly Europe) was repulsed. But already in 1926 a general strike of the proletariat broke out in England, unprecedented both in its scope and in the international solidarity of the workers that manifested itself in its course. This spoke of serious obstacles to the aggressive policy of imperialism. In July 1927, an anti-fascist demonstration and a general strike of the working people of Vienna escalated into street battles with the police.

During the years of the world economic crisis of 1929-1933, when its grave consequences fell primarily on the working people, class antagonism in the main capitalist states became even more acute.

The growth of unemployment and the decline in real wages were combined with an increase in the intensity of labor and the degree of its exploitation in capitalist production. In this regard, the data in Table 1 relating to the United States of America are indicative.

This table shows how, with the increasing wastefulness of labor resources, the exploitation of industrial workers increased. In 1932-1935. more than half of US manufacturing workers were in the ranks

of the unemployed. But each employed worker produced more than 70 percent more than in 1920.

The living conditions of the working people invariably impelled them to struggle against the dominance of the monopolies.

Under the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the contradictions between the capitalist metropolises and their colonies intensified extremely, a most acute crisis arose in the colonial system of imperialism, and the national liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries developed widely. The foundations of capitalism were also undermined by the colonial rear. The ebb and flow of the revolutionary wave also affected the national liberation movement, although its ebb was not as clear-cut as in the class battles in the capitalist countries. In the first years after the Great October Revolution, major events in the national liberation struggle, from uprisings to popular revolutions, engulfed Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Persia (Iran), Korea, Mongolia, Turkey, and other countries. The young Soviet state supported many of these revolutions.

In subsequent years, national liberation uprisings took place in Burma, India, Indo-China, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, in some cases turning into a war against the imperialist invaders; the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution of the Chinese people developed more and more.

The 14th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks stated that there is "an undermining of the entire system of imperialism by the awakening colonial and semi-colonial peoples (China, India, Syria, Morocco), whose movement, taking the form of national liberation wars in places, has reached enormous, previously unprecedented proportions.. » {46} . In an effort to preserve the colonial system, the imperialist powers responded to revolutions and uprisings with endless colonial wars. Such wars whetted the appetites of the capitalist predators, who were more and more eager for a world war.

Capitalism after the war 1914-1918 to an even greater extent than before it, was a constant source of military danger. The threat of new wars and interventions hung over humanity.

2. Aggravation of contradictions between the imperialist states

In the post-war years, a continuous process of further sharpening of the fundamental contradictions inherent in imperialism unfolded. It was based on deep economic factors operating both within individual countries and in the capitalist world economy as a whole.

The contradiction between the social character of production and the private property nature of capitalist appropriation became extremely acute. It was precisely this that caused the deep and protracted crises of overproduction that shook the capitalist world. With the end of the First World War and the imperialist military intervention against the Soviet state, the economic crisis of 1921-1923 unfolded. The stabilization of capitalism that followed was temporary, relative, and partial. Then the world economic crisis of 1929-1933, the most destructive in the history of capitalism, broke out. He was replaced by a long depression of a special kind. Since 1937, an economic crisis arose again in a number of capitalist countries, the development of which was interrupted by the World War.

The tense economic situation in the capitalist countries has given rise to a systematic underutilization of the production apparatus and made unemployment a chronic, ineradicable phenomenon. The capacity of domestic markets, limited by the low purchasing power of the population, predetermined the increased role of foreign markets for the capitalist states.

But these markets, too, shrunk as a result of Russia's falling out of the orbit of the world capitalist economy, the development of the national liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, and also because capitalism continued to keep the population of the colonial countries in poverty. All this testified to the disorganization of the world capitalist economy, generated by the general crisis of capitalism, and constituting one of the most important aspects of this crisis {47} .

The successful development of the socialist system, represented in those years by the Soviet Union, exposed the hostility of imperialism to the fundamental interests of the peoples, its inability to solve urgent socio-economic problems, and contributed to the widespread dissemination of socialist ideas. The struggle of the old, outdated capitalist system against growing socialism further aggravated the internal contradictions of imperialism.

The uneven development, which is an unconditional law of capitalism, acquired new features after the First World War. The general crisis of capitalism intensified the tendency to slow down technical progress. But this trend in some countries, for example in England, manifested itself to a greater extent, in others it had less effect (Germany and Japan). After the First World War, the further aggravation of the uneven development of capitalism was connected to a large extent also with the international economic policy of monopoly capital. The growing importance of international monopolies was evident. A major role in changing the correlation of economic potentials belonged to the course pursued by the ruling circles of the victorious capitalist powers in relation to Germany.

Germany's manufacturing capacity suffered from the war, reparations and the occupation of the Ruhr by France and Belgium in 1923; for a number of years the fixed capital of industry was not renewed. There were not enough funds for a broad modernization of production, especially since Germany, deprived of colonies, had no external sources of profit. Its capitalist opponents in the First World War could, it seemed, triumph over their most dangerous competitor, the revival of whose economic potential could inevitably drag on for many years, while production in other capitalist countries would go forward.

But at a critical moment (1923-1924), a new foundation began to be laid under the tottering edifice of German imperialism. The American monopolies played the leading role in this. They were not guided by compassion, so alien to the imperialists. On the contrary, overseas monopolists wanted to profit at the expense of the working people of Germany, to use it for the purposes of war against the USSR. In Germany, the costs of production, especially wages in the

early post-war years, were low, which promised extraction through the exploitation of the working class. By strengthening the power of capital in Germany, reactionary circles in the United States sought to turn that country into a kind of "anti-Bolshevik bastion" in Europe. They consciously staked on the revival of the military might of German imperialism, seeing in it a suitable weapon for carrying out their plans against socialism, the national liberation of the peoples, democracy, and peace.

An important milestone on the way to the formation and implementation of this political course dangerous for the cause of the world was the Dawes Plan, approved by the victorious powers in August 1924 and consolidating the leading role of the United States of America in the German question. The occupation of the Ruhr by French troops ended. Loans were provided to revive the German economy and military potential. It is estimated that only in 1923-1929. Germany received about 4 billion dollars of foreign loans, 2.5 billion of them from the USA {48} .

The financial support of the USA and Great Britain made it possible for the German monopolies within 5-6 years to recreate heavy industry and a powerful war industry—the most important precondition for future aggression. The main source of reparation payments, which Germany still had to pay, became taxes on consumer goods, which meant that the burden of reparations was transferred to the shoulders of German workers. The Dawes Plan was designed to sell German industrial products on the Soviet market, which was supposed to disrupt the industrialization of the USSR and turn it into an agrarian and raw material appendage of capitalist Germany.

With the help of the United States, the shortage of military-industrial raw materials in the country was overcome, the production of synthetic fuel, artificial rubber and fiber was launched, the cannon king Krupp was saved from bankruptcy, and German heavy industry was updated and modernized in a few years. The revival of the heavy industry and the military industry of Germany proceeded on the basis of not the old, but the new, most advanced equipment and technology for that time. German industry in terms of technical

equipment soon surpassed the industry of other capitalist countries of Europe.

The flow of capital from abroad contributed to the further concentration of production and the development in Germany of the system of state-monopoly capitalism.

The United States secured a large share in German industrial enterprises. The monopolies of the overseas power became owners or co-owners of the Opel automobile company and Ford factories in Germany, the electrical and radio firms Lorenz and Mixt-Genest, the Hugo Stinnes coal concern, the Deutsche Americanische Petroleum oil concern, and the chemical concern IG Farbenindustri, the united Steel Trust, and other industrial giants.

One of the main authors of the Dawes Plan, the German financial king Schacht, who later played an important role in the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, frankly, admitted that he "financed the rearmament of Germany with money belonging to foreigners." With the revival of Germany as a first-class industrial [20] power, the German militarists again found an industrial base for their plans for new aggression.

The German government discussed the problems of a new world war even when the first world war had not ended. Two meetings were devoted to this issue in the War Ministry, held on June 14 and September 5, 1917. At the first of them, the view was expressed that Germany should "develop economic life as best as possible in a peacetime period, adapting it to military use .. The more we develop the economy in peacetime, the better we are prepared for war. Under no circumstances should this process be allowed to weaken .. The meeting participants spoke of a future war as something predetermined. But with regard to the period that would be needed to recreate the military-industrial potential, they did not show much optimism. Characteristically, the discussion of these problems was continued eight years later in the imperial ministries of economy and defense , as if there was no defeat of Germany in the First World War, the November Revolution, and the formation of the Weimar Republic.

The hurricane of the economic crisis of 1929-1933. hit Germany hard. Its ruling circles took advantage of the moment to increase political and economic pressure on the working people. Unemployment in the country has reached enormous proportions. The German monopolists looked with malice at their neighbors in the West, who took advantage of Germany's defeat to seize many foreign markets. They could not put up with the fact that Germany's share in the exports of the capitalist countries was inferior to England. The share of individual countries in the total exports of the capitalist world in 1929 (in percent) was: USA - 15.6, England - 10.7, Germany - 9.2, France - 5.9 [51]. Germany became the most dangerous competitor in the world markets not only for England and France, but also for the USA. It sought to seize the dominant position in their markets, while its rivals made every effort to maintain and consolidate their monopoly. Already in this struggle lay the deep causes of the Second World War.

Table 2 can give an idea of the uneven development of capitalism after the First World War and until the mid-1930s.

The data in this table show the rapid growth of production in Germany and especially in Japan in comparison with the USA, England, and France. One of the manifestations of the uneven development was that Germany overcame the consequences of the economic crisis of 1929-1933 in a relatively short time, and in the USA, England, and France, even in 1935, the volume of production in heavy industry remained below the pre-crisis level. In Japanese industry, even those industries for which the country did not have the necessary amount of its own natural raw materials developed rapidly.

Thus, a new correlation of economic potentials took shape in the capitalist world. It less and less corresponded to the existing distribution of colonial possessions. Before the First World War, Germany had colonies in Africa and the Pacific, although they were 10 times inferior to the British in terms of territory and 30 times in population. After the First World War, Germany was deprived of all colonies, while England increased them even more. The relevant data are given in Table 3. [21]

Table 2. Development of a number of sectors of the economy of the main capitalist countries in 1920-1935 {52}

years	USA (including Saarland)	England Japan	France	Germany	(including Japan)
Coal mining (million tons)					
1920	597	233	24	229	29
1925	528	247	47	285	32
1930	487	248	54	302	31
1935	385	226	46	290	38
Iron smelting (million tons)					
1920	38	8	3	7	1
1925	37	6	9	12	1
1930	32	6	ten	12	1
1935	22	7	6	13	2
Steel production (million tons)					
1920	43	9	3	8	0.8
1925	46	8	8	14	1.3
1930	41	7	9	13	2.3
1935	35	ten	6	16	4.7
Electricity generation (billion kWh)					
1930	115	12	17	29	16
1932	99	14	15	24	18
1934	110	17	17	31	23
1935	119	19	18	37	25
Aluminum smelting (thousand tons)					

1920	89	eight	12	31	No information
1930	103.9	13.2	24.6	30.7	
1932	47.6	10.2	14.4	19.3	
1935	54.1	15.1	22	70.8	2.7

Note. Electricity production in Germany in 1930-1934 without the Saarland. In England - vacation from tires, in other countries - gross output.

Table 3. The size and population of the colonial possessions of the imperialist powers {53}

Countries		Area (million square kilometers)		Population (million people)	
1913	1920	1913	1920		
England		29.7	34.6	376.7	406.2
France	10.5	11.7	53.4	53.4	
USA	0.3	0.3	9.7	12.4	
Germany		3.0	Did not have	12.3	Did not have [22]

The struggle in foreign markets proved to be more intense and more important for the capitalist countries than before. This was explained by the general reduction in the sphere of exploitation as a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the upsurge of the national liberation movement caused by it, the lack of sales markets, overproduction crises, and, finally, the increased role of many types of colonial raw materials and fuel, especially oil. A radical redistribution of the world on the basis of the use of armed force seemed to the monopolists the only way out.

As before the First World War, in the capitalist world the question arose of a radical redistribution of the colonies and spheres of influence in accordance with the real correlation of forces of the "great" powers. The development of this contradiction inexorably led

to a new pre-war political crisis, to the armed struggle of the imperialist states.

Along with the contradictions between yesterday's winners and the vanquished, the rivalry between the winners themselves intensified.

Using their economic power, the American monopolies pushed back British competitors, especially where their positions were most vulnerable. "America has replaced Germany as England's main rival in financial and commercial matters, as well as in the field of maritime power, noticeably ousting the latter from monetary and financial control over the world market" {54}. The vulnerable areas of Great Britain were its dominions: Canada, Australia, New Zealand; a number of dependent countries of Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay; finally, some countries in Southeast Asia, as well as China. The United States of America has successfully used such an important weapon of economic enslavement as the provision of loans and the use of the power of finance capital. Already in 1925, the XIV Congress of the CPSU(b) noted "the unprecedentedly increased role of the North American United States, bordering on their world financial hegemony ..." {55} .

The ever-increasing expansionist aspirations of US imperialism in relation to Southeast Asia and the Pacific ran into a counter flow of expansion coming from Japan. The First World War was widely used by Japanese imperialism to seize important strategic and economic positions. Japan, having gained a foothold in China, turned it into its colony, its goods penetrated the markets not only of many neighboring countries, but even of Mexico and other states of the Western Hemisphere. However, many of Japan's acquisitions were taken away from her at the Washington Conference, where England acted as a united front with the United States against Japan on a number of issues.

In subsequent years, British diplomacy flirted with Japan, seeking to take advantage of Japanese-American imperialist contradictions. This further aggravated the antagonism between the US and Great Britain. In 1927, the President of the United States, Colonel Coolidge, angrily reported to Congress: "Japan cooperates with us in many

respects, but we are unable to come to an agreement with Great Britain" {56} . Two years later, when discussing the naval construction program in Congress, Senator Walsh of Montana declared with utmost frankness: "It is quite obvious that the construction of cruisers proposed by the bill is designed for war first with England, second with Japan" {57} . [23]

If the United States of America was not always able to enlist the support of England in the affairs of the countries of Southeast Asia and the Pacific basin, then in European affairs there was a far-reaching agreement between them in an effort to turn Germany, hostile to them, into their ally against the Soviet state. With the passage of time, a similar direction of the joint Anglo-American policy was increasingly asserted in relation to Japan.

France found itself in a difficult position after the First World War. Previously, with insufficient military and economic potential, its positions in Europe were largely determined by an alliance with Russia, which raised the political weight of France. Having taken an irreconcilably hostile course towards the Soviet country and having made it their task during the years of armed intervention to recreate a Russia of the tsarist type, French politicians ultimately sacrificed the prestige of their state to class interests. The ruling circles of France tried to compensate for the loss of the alliance with Russia against Germany by military blocs with Poland and the Little Entente {58}. These blocs were anti-Soviet in nature, did not meet the true national interests of France and therefore could not strengthen its position in Europe, including in relation to Germany. Attempts to keep the German economy at the level of the first post-war years, even with the use of violent policies (the occupation of the Ruhr), suffered a complete collapse, which, with the adoption of the Anglo-American Dawes Plan, marked the end of the period of relative predominance of France in post-war capitalist Europe and the transition of the leading role to England and USA. The Anglo-French Entente also ceased to exist. The subsequent steps of British diplomacy, which equalized the rights of victorious France and defeated Germany (as was done at the Locarno conference),

contributed to an even greater aggravation of imperialist contradictions in Europe.

France's new position among the European capitalist powers encouraged the Italian imperialists, who had long since set their sights not only on the French and British colonies in Africa, but also on the adjacent part of French territory.

A stormy battle broke out between Italy and France at the London Naval Conference in 1930 over a naval construction program. On its agenda was the issue of extending to cruisers, destroyers and submarines the proportion that was adopted at the Washington Conference in 1922 in relation to the largest warships. The essence of this proportion was that the combined tonnages of the battleships of the United States, England, Japan, France, and Italy were to be related, respectively, as 5: 5: 3: 1.75: 1.75, and aircraft carriers as 5: 5: 3: 2 : 2.22. However, the new agreement was adopted at the London Naval Conference only between the USA, Britain, and Japan. France and Italy did not join the agreement because they could not, despite all the efforts of British diplomacy, agree among themselves. France demanded a higher relative share for itself, with which Italy disagreed. It turned out to be impossible to resolve this conflict, and the Italo-French agreement on limiting the total tonnage of cruisers and submarines was not reached.[24]

The appetites of Italian fascism increased, as England supported Italy to a large extent in the struggle against France. British diplomacy, drawing closer to fascist Italy, sought to find an ally against France and turn the predatory claims of Italian imperialism towards her, use it to strengthen its positions in the world, as well as for aggression against the USSR.

The Anglo-Italian rapprochement had a negative effect on the situation in Europe, undermining even those weak foundations of European security that bourgeois France tried to create in its own interests. Hungary (the Italo-Hungarian friendship treaty of 1927) and Bulgaria were drawn into the orbit of Anglo-Italian policy. To disintegrate the Little Entente from within, Italy tried to come to terms with Yugoslavia and weaken France's allied relations with

Romania. In 1926, for this purpose, an Italian-Romanian treaty was concluded on an anti-Soviet basis. With the support of British diplomacy, Italy asserted its dominance over Albania (the Italo-Albanian treaty of 1926, which made Italy its "guarantor").

The long-standing litigation between Italy and Germany continued in connection with Italian claims to part of the territory of Austria. At times, it took on a sharp form, and Italy even allowed itself to unequivocally threaten its rival, who for the time being tried to avoid conflicts.

A world war was brewing within the capitalist world. In this world, there were a number of directions in which a new global military battle could unfold. "What do the kings of industry want by once again organizing a worldwide slaughter? M. Gorky wrote during these years. "They imagine that the war will help them jump out of the clutches of the economic crisis created by the anarchy of production, the idiocy of the passion for profit" {59} .

Along with the hostile tension in relations between the imperialist powers, the contradiction between the two opposing social systems also intensified. The cunning aspirations of the ruling circles of capitalist countries to take the imminent war beyond the limits of the capitalist system that gave rise to it and to try to resolve the internal contradictions of this system, as well as the class antagonism of the two systems, by means of a war against the Soviet Union, became more and more dangerous. The Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks noted in 1927 that "preparation for war against the USSR means nothing more than the reproduction on an extended basis of the class struggle between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the victorious proletariat. That will be the class meaning of this war," the decision of the plenum emphasized{60} .

The contradictions of imperialism and its class antagonism towards the Soviet Union determined the growth of militarism in the internal life, ideology, and politics of the main capitalist powers. Militarism was called upon to serve the class goals of the domestic and foreign policy of monopoly capital. As far back as 1908, V. I. Lenin wrote

about the social functions of militarism [25] : "Modern militarism is the result of capitalism. In both its forms, it is the "vital manifestation" of capitalism: as a military force used by the capitalist states in their external conflicts ("Militarismus nach aussen", as the Germans say) and as a weapon in the hands of the ruling classes to suppress every kind (economic and political) movements of the proletariat ("Militarismus nach innen")" {61} .

After the First World War, militarism manifested itself most clearly in the growth of armaments in the capitalist world, in the aggressive foreign policy of the capitalist states, and in the ideological preparations by imperialism for new wars.

3. The growth of armaments in the capitalist countries

The further aggravation of the contradictions of capitalism was the objective basis for imperialism **to create a constant military danger**. But it would be a mistake, on this basis, to consider the militarists as unwitting victims of the historical process, to exclude the role of the subjective factor. Like all previous exploiting classes, the capitalists have always regarded wars as a completely natural matter, considering the preparation and leadership of their conduct as their inalienable prerogative. Thus, a certain unity was obtained, the closest interweaving of the objective and subjective prerequisites for a new war. History irrefutably testifies that from the first days of the peaceful period, the militaristic wing of the monopoly bourgeoisie quite consciously, systematically, and purposefully conducted all-round preparations for new wars.

The greed of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the absolute incompatibility of its fundamental interests with the progressive development of mankind, was especially manifested in the constant all-encompassing arms race. The First World War ended, the wartime armies were demobilized, and the growth of armaments continued. Five months of peacetime have already passed, but still, according to V. I. Lenin, "... the entire capitalist world is armed from head to toe and is waiting for the moment, choosing the best strategic conditions, examining methods of attack" {62} .

The politicians of the bourgeoisie understood that the working people were extremely exhausted by the war and that it was impossible to come forward openly with a program of armaments. In order to appease the peace-hungry masses and divert their attention from the militaristic activities of governments, long and fruitless verbal tournaments were organized at numerous meetings of the League of Nations devoted to the problem of disarmament {63}. Hiding behind the guise of supporters of peace, the capitalist powers sought only to weaken their imperialist neighbors (especially likely opponents) and sought to strengthen their military might in every possible way. And it is no coincidence that all the projects and proposals for "disarmament" were drawn up in the capitalist countries, as a rule, by those who directly plan the war: the general staffs. Things got to the point that in 1926 Hindenburg was going to appoint one of the most notorious militarists of that time, Colonel-General von Seeckt , to be Germany's representative in the disarmament negotiations [26] in the League of Nations system . But the German militarists still did not dare to throw such a brazen challenge to world public opinion.

Is it any wonder that the League of Nations has not succeeded even in the smallest measure and even for the shortest period of time in stopping the arms race? Real disarmament was not at all included in the calculations of the founders of this international organization.

The growth of armaments in the world of capital was also facilitated by the fact that in the course of the war many decisive positions in the political life of the belligerent countries were seized by the military. Describing this circumstance, V. I. Lenin wrote in January 1920: "... the most criminal and reactionary imperialist war of 1914-1918 brought up in all countries and brought to the forefront of politics in all, even the most democratic republics, precisely tens and tens of thousands reactionary officers preparing terror and carrying out terror in favor of the bourgeoisie, in favor of capital against the proletariat" {65} . Speaking about the growing role of the reactionary officers in the political life of the capitalist countries, V. I. Lenin also emphasized that it was provided with the sympathy of the bourgeoisie and landowners {66}. As the American anti-fascist

historian G. Fried rightly noted, the Weimar Republic took better care of the officers of the old regime than the Wilhelmian monarchy itself {67} .

The growth in armaments was ensured primarily by an increase in military budgets, largely associated with an increase in the technical level of the bourgeois armies. Under lulling speeches about the past "last war" and "eternal peace", the imperialist governments, where openly, where secretly, steadily increased appropriations for military needs.

In Germany, in addition to the official appropriations for military needs, from 35 million to 74 million marks were annually uncontrolled and secretly "snatched" from the funds of other ministries {68} . From December 1925 to March 1927 alone, the Japanese military received more than 900.5 million yen {69} on emergency military budgets . Italy's military spending per capita increased in 1927 against the pre-war period (1909) by 64 percent. This was how matters stood in the countries of the future fascist coalition.

A similar picture was observed in other capitalist countries. Even according to official figures, the annual spending of the US War Department for the first three post-war years, on average, exceeded the pre-war level by more than 19 times. The New York World rightly wrote at the time: "The United States spends more on preparing for future wars than any other state in the world. It is pointless to talk about savings in federal government spending if this senseless waste continues .

The military budgets of all the principal capitalist countries in aggregate (excluding Germany) increased from 1912 to 1924/25 by 1,442 million rubles {73} . Military [27] spending per capita in the mid-1920s was (in dollars): in the USA - 5.7, in France - 8.7 (for comparison, we note that in the USSR - 1.5).

The rapid growth of direct military spending continued in the second half of the 1920s. According to the League of Nations, France's expenditure on the maintenance of the land army, air and naval forces increased from 5,543.6 million francs in 1925 to 11,599.7

million francs in 1930/31 {74} . Huge sums for the preparation of the war were attracted additionally. So, in 1927/28, in connection with the adoption of the laws "On the general organization of the army in peacetime", "On the composition of personnel and the size of the army", "On the recruitment of the army" and other military measures, an additional 5 billion francs were allocated {75} .

Even the global economic crisis of 1929-1933 did not stop the increase in military spending. According to the estimates of the Berlin Market Institute, made on the basis of the military budgets of 53 countries, the index of world production (the level of 1928 is taken as 100 percent) was 54 in 1913, and did not exceed 56 in 1932; at the same time, the index of world expenditure on armaments rose from 64 in 1913 to 107 in 1932 {76} .

There was a certain peculiarity in the growth of armaments in the 1920s: the emphasis was placed primarily on the improvement of weapons, military equipment, and the professional training of personnel, which was due to the emergence of new means of armed struggle.

Noting this striving of the bourgeoisie, V. I. Lenin wrote in 1920: "... after the great imperialist massacre, all governments in the world began to fear the army of the whole people, open to the peasants and workers, and specially equipped with especially improved equipment of military units» {77} .

Many military theories of those times were also aimed at substantiating just such a course: the theory of "independent air warfare", "small professional armies", "mechanized" or "tank" warfare.

The cherished dream of the exploiting classes was vividly expressed by the English military theorist Fuller: "... the ideal army to strive for is not an armed people, but one person, moreover, not some super-scientist, but simply a person capable of pressing a button or removing a cork and thus put into action the machines invented by the best minds of science in peacetime .

The most far-sighted military theorists understood the impracticability of such aspirations. They had to reckon with the real state of affairs and take into account the growing role of man in modern wars. The former chief of the general staff of the French army, General M. Debenet, wrote: "We must not forget that technology that has gained dominance and become the god of war is in itself inert. Whatever its character, be it guns, machine guns, planes, tanks, gases, or other deadly weapons, they acquire value only in the hands of man; therefore the first requirement of technology is the requirement ... in human strength» {79} . The French general was echoed by the Austrian - Eimansberger: "And in the future, the decisive factor will not be the machine, but the person who uses it"{80} .

Most of the military leaders of the capitalist states not only recognized the decisive role of man in war, but also rejected the idea of a small professional army, considering it incapable of protecting the fundamental interests of the ruling classes. Italian lieutenant colonel R. Maretti in the book "What will tomorrow's war be like?" wrote: "It is madness to allow oneself to be blinded by the ghost of a small shock army" {81}. And the governments of the major imperialist powers, as a rule, followed the course of maintaining and expanding mass armies. In the victorious and neutral countries in 1925 the number of armed forces was almost 1.2 million more than in 1913 {82} . The world war is over, Germany is defeated, and the victors are stubbornly increasing the size of their armies.

A specific feature of the post-war period was the rapid growth of "unofficial armies". In all capitalist countries, military-trained reserves were trained by various non-army organizations (sports clubs, rifle unions, fascist combat detachments, etc.).

In the United States, such personnel were created primarily in the National Guard. The new national defense law passed by the US Congress in June 1920 (in force until 1950) set the upper threshold for its strength at 436 thousand people, that is, 70 percent more than the subsequent (1922-1935) average annual number of regular US armed forces {83} .

In Japan, various militarist-fascist organizations were engaged in the preparation of the unofficial army: the Union of Reservists of the Empire, the Cherry Society (Sakuraikai), which consisted of officers from the Ministry of War and the General Staff of the Army, the Society for State Foundations (Kokuhonsha), in which included about 200 large representatives of the military ("gumbatsu") and monopolies ("zaibatsu") {84} . According to 1928 data, out of 5 million students in Japanese secondary and higher schools, more than 1,400,000 people {85} received military training .

In Germany, immediately after the First World War, hotbeds of militarism became the German Officers' Union, which united up to 100 thousand people, and the soldiers' unions, numbering up to 2 million people at the end of 1927. Since 1918, one of the largest armed organizations of the monopoly bourgeoisie and Junkers, the "Steel Helmet" ("Stahlhelm") {86} , has been actively operating . The remilitarization process was also greatly facilitated by such reactionary paramilitary organizations as the Imperial Flag Union (Reichsbanner), the Young Germans Order (Jungdeutsche Orden), the Tannenbergbund, the Werewolf and others. The armed detachments of the National Socialist Party were formed and strengthened. Numerous [29] cases of financing by the Reichswehr {87} military exercises organized by assault detachments, as well as the transfer of large quantities of weapons to them, were registered as early as 1929. Contrary to article 177 of the Versailles Peace Treaty, which categorically forbade civil unions and institutions to deal with any military issues, especially training or exercises "in the art of war or the use of military weapons" {88} , all these organizations trained personnel for the army.

Particularly widespread militarization of the population was carried out in those countries where fascism had already succeeded in seizing state power. So, in Hungary, all young people aged 12 to 21 had to attend the Levente military sports society without fail. According to the report of the chief leader of this society, by October 1927, 700 thousand people {89} were involved in military training .

Fascist Italy, in essence, was turned into a real military camp - children of 6-8 years old were part of the detachments of the so-

called "wolf cubs", 8-14 years old - in the detachments of "balilla", organized according to a military model; young people aged 14-18 were included in the "avant-garde" detachments, and from the age of 18 the most "tested" and "trustworthy" were transferred to "youthful fascist combat groups"; university youth were part of special paramilitary fascist organizations; "military culture" courses were introduced at universities and secondary schools; in order to receive a high school diploma, a student had to pass an examination for an officer's rank. This fascist system was given legal form in the law of December 31, 1934 "On the militarization of the Italian nation", which established that "military training should begin as soon as the child is able to learn,{90} .

The total strength of the unofficial army in many capitalist countries was enormous. According to available data, by 1927 it was over 656,000 in Great Britain, 800,000 in Italy (excluding Boy Scouts), 1,855,000 in the United States of America, and almost 4 million in Germany {91}. A deep scientific assessment of the role and place of these armed detachments of the bourgeoisie is given in the theses "The Tasks of the Comintern in the Struggle Against War and War Danger", approved by the VIII Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) in May 1927: "Before the World War of 1914, capitalism did not know the wide distribution of this type of purely class counter-revolutionary army. He used "state" organs, the standing army, the police, and the gendarmerie to fight the mass movements. The aggravation of the class struggle after the war removed the last vestiges of "democratism" from the bourgeoisie. Everywhere capital organizes its fighting organizations, the number of which in a number of countries exceeds the size of a regular army. The task of these detachments, in addition to maintaining an internal reaction in "peaceful" time, is in wartime to: a) to be a permanent reliable reserve for the suppression of revolutionary movements that arise during the war or towards the end of it; b) to drive the masses with bayonets to war in the event of mobilization; c) to[30] to be ready personnel for modern armies in case of an imperialist war» {92} .

Using every means to increase and train the informal army, the imperialist bourgeoisie paid special attention to increasing the combat capability of the regular armed forces. This was taken care of by the governments of all capitalist countries, but the German monopolists showed particular resourcefulness, forced, at least outwardly, to reckon with the restrictions contained in the Treaty of Versailles. Suffice it to point out that, according to some sources, the Weimar Republic in 1930 spent as much on the maintenance of the 100,000-strong Reichswehr as France spent on the maintenance of an army of 750,000 men {93} .

Even under the conditions of the "democratic" Weimar Republic, German imperialism succeeded in reviving the army, the main instrument for carrying out its aggressive plans. Already in those years, the army again became a "state within a state", "a gray overcoat closed in itself with a unified spirit, again a model of diligence, discipline, order, Prussian duty in peacetime; thanks to tireless, persistent, often exhausting work, an army perfectly trained in military affairs, outwardly monolithic and again authoritative, is a force for a hostile coalition, despite its small number. All the negative phenomena of November 9 have been completely overcome; the machine is functioning again to the smallest wheel..." {94} .

Particular attention was paid to the selection and training of officers. The training of reserve officers from among the students of higher and secondary specialized educational institutions was increasingly developed. For example, in the USA in 1928 it was organized in 325 educational institutions; officer ranks were awarded annually to more than 6 thousand students who were included in the corps of reserve officers {95}. Command cadres grew rapidly in Weimar Germany as well. Article 160 of the Versailles Peace Treaty, according to which the total number of officers, including staff of headquarters, should not exceed 4 thousand people, was grossly violated. Already in 1929, in the Reichswehr, for every thousand soldiers, there were 100 officers, 30 senior non-commissioned officers and 300-400 non-commissioned officers, there were 992 officers in the general staff of the Reichswehr - 303 officers more than

in the general staff of the Kaiser's peacetime army. The size of the apparatus of the War Ministry also greatly exceeded the staff of the Kaiser's Ministry. The system of early transfer of a large part of the officers to the reserve and their transfer to the state pension was widely used.

In the selection and staffing of the officer corps, the principle of bourgeois class was steadily pursued. The overwhelming majority of the officer corps, and especially the generals, in all imperialist countries consisted of representatives of the top of the ruling classes. This is irrefutably evidenced by statistical data for a number of countries, including Weimar Germany.

The Reichswehr of Republican Germany was the direct heir to the Kaiser's army and its militaristic traditions. This was manifested, in particular, in the fact that officers of noble origin enjoyed special influence in the Reichswehr. Nobles made up only a little over 0.1 percent of the total population of the Weimar [31] Republic, but on May 1, 1932, 52 percent of Reichswehr generals, 29 percent of colonels, 23 percent of lieutenant colonels, 16 percent of majors, 17 percent of captains and captains, 23 percent of lieutenants and lieutenants {98} . Characteristically, during the years of the republican regime in Germany, the number of officers of noble origin in the army almost did not decrease (21.3 percent in 1921 and 20.5 percent in 1932){99} .

Table 4. Class origin of the generals and officers of the German Reichswehr (as of 1930) {96}

Generals and officers by origin	Quantity (percentage)
From large industrialists, bankers, large merchants, directors, leading employees of the economy	7.3
From landowners, large tenants	5.3
Of the officers	54.4 {97}
From senior officials and freelancers	28.1
From the lower and middle officials, employees, peasants, handicraftsmen, and artisans	4.8

From workers 0.1

The class selection of the officer corps largely determined its face. The allegiance of this corps to the monopoly bourgeoisie, due to its belonging to the class of masters, was reinforced by a widely developed system of ideological indoctrination of the personnel of the army and navy. And in this the ruling classes relied on everything most reactionary and ossified, in order to achieve the desired result—to ensure the blind obedience of the masses to the will of the imperialist governments. Even the bourgeois press, describing the system of education of the Reichswehr personnel, was forced to admit that it was carried out by “methods of the reactionary Prussian-Kaiser school”, that “all officers, from the captain and above, are selected feudal reactionary elements. Any independent thought in the Reichswehr is unceremoniously killed, faith in authority is cultivated,{100} . And it is no coincidence that these officers later formed the backbone of the Nazi army.

The officer corps was brought up in a reactionary spirit in Japan as well. In the Miyako newspaper on March 3, 1930, Lieutenant General Tamon published an article under the meaningful title "The Brain of the Nation and the Army", in which he directly stated that "no administrative or political organization of the country can replace the officer corps, which carries a high the spirit of Japonism, boundless devotion to the divine emperor and willingness to die for him" {101} . [32]

In order to ensure the unquestioning obedience of the rank and file, the bourgeois governments did not disdain discipline with a cane. For example, in the Horthy army, officers and non-commissioned officers widely used degrading physical punishment of soldiers {102} . The basis for the political education of personnel in all bourgeois armies was the incitement of nationalism and chauvinism, the shameless lie that the army supposedly stands outside politics, above classes and serves the whole of society, inciting hatred towards the revolutionary masses of all countries, and especially towards the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Many bourgeois armies took part in new colonial wars and various armed actions against the peoples of other states. So, after the capture of the city of Nanjing by the Chinese National Revolutionary Army, ships of the US Navy, as well as a British ship on March 24, 1927, subjected the residential quarters of the city to a brutal bombardment, as a result of which 2 thousand people were killed and wounded.

One of the main directions in the arms race was the technical improvement of the military machine. The equipment of military formations with more advanced means of armed struggle increased sharply. If at the beginning of the war of 1914-1918. each wartime infantry division had 24 machine guns in France and the USA, then in 1927 in France - 483, and in the USA - already 947 {103} . The number of combat aircraft grew especially rapidly during the first post-war decade. According to the official certificate of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, submitted to the League of Nations, by the end of 1927, the air forces of France had 6114 aircraft, the United States of America - 3800, Great Britain - 3460, Italy - 1700, Poland - 498 aircraft {104} .

The race also continued in the construction of the navy (Table 5). In the United States in 1922 the cost of materiel (ships and their weapons) was almost 3.6 times higher than before the war (in 1912 - 402 million dollars, in 1922 - 1,446 million dollars) { 105} .

In the imperialist countries there was an intensified militarization of all branches of the economy, especially industry. In Japan in 1929, 63 percent of the products of the machine-building and metal-working industries were produced at factories in military arsenals. In 1930, about 50 percent of all workers in these two branches of industry were engaged in war production {106} . More than 2 thousand factories of factories in Japan had orders for the military and naval ministries {107} . By 1931, private companies, having received large government subsidies, built 8 aircraft factories, 6 aircraft engine factories, as well as factories for precision instruments, radio equipment, and others {108} .

In Poland, in order to adapt the entire state apparatus more carefully to the war during 1927-1929. in almost all ministries, state banks, departments, and institutions, up to the voivodeship departments, military departments were organized, which were headed by proteges of the dictatorship of J. Pilsudski.

In almost all capitalist countries, the chemical (especially nitrogen) industry, which is of tremendous importance for military affairs, developed at a rapid pace. [33]

The arms trade has become widespread. In 1931 alone, according to official (greatly underestimated) data, England exported arms worth \$13,366,000, the United States \$3,897,000, France \$2,730,000, and Italy \$2,243,000. Small countries were also rushing to snatch their share of the fat war pie. In the same 1931, Czechoslovakia sold weapons worth 3,922 thousand dollars, Sweden - 3,705 thousand dollars, Belgium - 1,490 thousand dollars, and Holland - 708 thousand dollars {110} .

With the obvious connivance and direct financial assistance of the US and British monopolists, the process of secret remilitarization of Germany was rapidly developing. In his article "Leaders and Workers of Arms Factories", published on March 1, 1942, in the company's magazine, H. Krupp boasted that almost from the very moment of the defeat of Germany in November 1918, and even when the winners at Versailles were arguing about the conditions , on which the Krupp company could continue to exist, he began [34] secretly to prepare for the subsequent rearmament of Germany {111}. Already in 1922, a secret agreement was concluded between the command of the Reichswehr and the Krupp firm on the development of designs for tanks and artillery pieces {112}. And in October 1926, General Heye, taking command of the Reichswehr from von Seeckt, told him: "You again put Germany in the saddle. All that remains for me is to keep her in it." {113} .

Even more favorable conditions for the secret rearmament of the Reichswehr were created after the work of the Allied Military Control Commission in Germany ceased in December 1926. In 1928-

1929. the construction of military aircraft, armored vehicles and tanks began. To get around the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, German monopolists entered into various alliances with foreign firms or set up shell companies abroad, as a result of which German designers could produce military equipment in foreign factories. Part of the combat aircraft was built at the Heinkel factories, relocated after the war to Sweden and Denmark, the other part was produced at the enterprises - branches of the Dornier company in Italy, Switzerland, and Spain {114}. By the end of 1929, in Germany itself there were 12 aircraft-building firms, 4 firms that built gliders, 6 aircraft engines, 4 firms that produced parachutes {115} . In 1929, a new mortar model was created. Around 1931, a tank was made, which was the prototype of those T-IIIIs with which the German tank divisions crossed Western Europe in 1940. Further development of this design made it possible in 1943 to begin production of tiger tanks {116} . Active research was carried out in the field of military chemistry. Production of military optics at the enterprises of the Zeiss concern from 1923-1924. by the beginning of the 1930s, it had more than quadrupled {117} .

Measures to arm Germany were carried out in deep secrecy, but the nationwide course towards the all-round revival of the military-economic potential was an open secret. In 1929, 13 countries, including France, China, Spain, and Belgium, informed the League of Nations that Germany was their main supplier of weapons and ammunition {118} . Subsequently, German monopolists and former Hitlerite generals and admirals admitted that it was the secret remilitarization of Weimar Germany that created the decisive prerequisite for the rapid growth of Germany's aggressive military power after the seizure of power by fascism {119} .

Even the briefest analysis of the practical activities of the imperialist states in the first post-war decade irrefutably [35] proves the profound correctness of the official statement of the Soviet delegation at the IV session of the preparatory commission of the League of Nations for disarmament in November 1927: "...neither quantitative nor qualitative growth of armaments no one dares to deny" {120} . This was the situation in all the major capitalist powers,

including Germany, which already in the 1920s grossly violated many of the military articles of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

4. Aggressive foreign policy of the capitalist states

In the twenty years that separated the world wars, it is difficult to find a year when there was no war in any part of the globe. The most significant of these—an armed intervention against the Soviet state—was organized by the imperialist powers even before the end of the First World War. The intervention was a decisive factor in the development of the civil war in Russia. V. I. Lenin noted that it was “world imperialism ... that caused us, in essence speaking, a civil war and is guilty of prolonging it ...” {121} . Armed intervention and civil war were the clearest manifestation of class hatred and the most acute form of the class struggle of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the exploiters overthrown in Russia, against the workers and peasants.

On the part of the working people of Soviet Russia, the civil war was just, liberating, legal. They had to pay a heavy price for their right to build socialism. During the three years of the war against the interventionists and the White Guards, the number of killed, wounded, died from epidemics and famine in the RSFSR alone amounted to approximately 8 million people. The invaders inflicted enormous damage on the national economy of the country, which had already suffered during the First World War.

The defeat suffered by imperialism in its attempts to stifle the socialist revolution “in its cradle” further inflamed the hatred of the ruling circles of the capitalist states for the Land of Soviets, for the workers', democratic and national liberation movement. This hatred manifested itself in the crimes of the interventionists against Soviet Russia, in the bloody massacres of the imperialists and their henchmen against the workers and peasants who had risen to the revolutionary struggle in Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, and Estonia. Counter-revolutionary terror also manifested itself in one form or another in France, the United States of America, and many other capitalist states.

The leading role in the intrigues and actions of the counter-revolution everywhere belonged to the ruling circles of the victorious powers in the First World War. The main force of world reaction in the first post-war years was the imperialists of the United States of America, Britain, and France. The "democratic freedoms" of the bourgeois world served only as a cover for the dictatorship of its rulers.

During these years, the imperialists unleashed a series of wars against the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries, who had risen to fight for national liberation. The imperialists forced Greece to come out against the revolution in Turkey, which overthrew the power of the Sultan, providing it with arms and financial assistance. In 1919, England began a war against Afghanistan, which had embarked on the path of national liberation. The United States of America carried out continuous acts of aggression against the countries of the Western [36]hemisphere. During 1918-1919. their troops repeatedly invaded the territory of Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Haiti. The real war was undertaken by the United States of America in 1926-1933. against the legitimate government of Nicaragua, headed by President X. Sacasa and national hero A. Sandino. Spain and France in 1921-1926 waged war against the popular masses of Morocco, who created the independent Republic of Rif, France in 1920-1926. opposed the Druze national liberation uprising in Syria. An open Anglo-American intervention in China began in 1927, facilitating a counter-revolutionary coup for the right-wing circles of the Kuomintang headed by Chiang Kai-shek.

All these wars and interventions did not obscure the imperialists' main goal - the destruction of the Soviet state. The inglorious defeat in the war against the newly born Republic of Soviets taught the ruling circles of the Western countries nothing. In an effort to keep Soviet Russia in constant tension and hinder peaceful socialist construction, the imperialists resorted to organizing raids by armed bands: Finnish reactionaries on Karelia, Petliurists on the Ukraine, Basmachi on Central Asia. In 1929, the Chinese militarists organized an armed conflict on the borders of the USSR.

The imperialists were planning a new armed intervention and hoped to carry it out through the joint efforts of the united anti-Soviet front of the capitalist powers. In the mid-1920s, the leading role in the struggle to create such a front belonged to the ruling circles of England and the United States of America. Germany was supposed to be used as the main striking force and instrument of the entire world reaction against the socialist state. Strong and at the same time dependent on the British and American monopolies, Germany had to justify their confidence and take on the mission of armed struggle against the revolutionary forces of the European continent. A kind of "division of labor" has developed between England and the United States. American banks and monopolies took on a major role in the revival of heavy industry and the military potential of Germany, which was the most important aspect of the Dawes Plan. British diplomacy was engaged in the political formation of the anti-Soviet bloc.

The German imperialists wanted new territories as a reward. German Foreign Minister G. Stresemann explained his position quite frankly in a private letter. "I count ...," he wrote, "to get back the German lands in the East" {122}. The word "back" had a special meaning here, it reflected the opinion of the German imperialists that they "in the East" should own all those lands to which the German conquerors rushed from the Middle Ages until the First World War. Such a course was fully consistent with the secret plans of the German military. One of its typical representatives, General Trainer, wrote in his diary at that time: "Since I became Minister of War, all my thoughts have been directed only towards the realization of one goal: the liberation of the country (by "liberation" the German militarists always understood the seizure of neighboring lands. — Ed.). It is clear that I could not openly express this goal either to the public or when visiting the troops. Such a goal cannot be achieved by a quick onslaught, but only with great patience. In a difficult parliamentary struggle, I sought to raise the Reichswehr to the highest level of perfection and in the coming time to turn it into a combat instrument of the modern method of warfare . [37]

In order to deceive public opinion, highly experienced British diplomacy decided to present the creation of an anti-Soviet bloc as a "defense" of the capitalist world from the "Soviet threat", as a guarantee of European security. In February 1925, British Foreign Secretary O. Chamberlain wrote a secret note in which he wrote that Soviet Russia "loomed like a thundercloud over the eastern horizon of Europe - threatening, incalculable, but above all isolated." He proposed "defining a security policy in spite of Russia and even, perhaps, precisely because of Russia" {124} . This was how the aggressive essence of the "security policy" proposed by him was outlined.

For the practical implementation of the outlined policy in October 1925 in Locarno (Switzerland) a conference of representatives of England, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Poland, and Czechoslovakia was convened. It was seen as a political continuation of the Dawes Plan. This is how F. Kellogg, who at that time held the post of US Secretary of State, assessed it. "The Locarno Conference," he said to Congress, "is an outstanding achievement; it naturally followed the work of the Dawes Committee" {125} . She legally formalized the new policy of yesterday's winners towards Germany.

For tactical reasons, the United States of America did not take a direct part in the Locarno Conference, but in terms of its activity it was not inferior to the leading power, England. The true role of the United States was then exposed by E. Telman: "American bankers do not officially participate in Locarno. Not a single representative of the American bourgeoisie signed the treaty. But American finance capital, which regards Europe as a great colony from which it can extract monstrous profits, cooperated most actively in the implementation of Locarno. In the offices of the bankers, big industrialists, and big agrarians, the representatives of American finance capital made it clear that American imperialism wanted Locarno.

There were sharp imperialist contradictions between the participants in the Locarno Conference. However, they faded into the background before the hatred of the Soviet Union, which became the leitmotif of the entire work of the conference and its decisions. With

good reason, the correspondent of the newspaper of the French Communists wrote from Locarno: "Diplomatic representatives have only one thing in common: hatred of Bolshevism and the Soviet state" {127} .

An expression of anti-Sovietism was the guaranteed pact of Germany, Belgium, France, England, and Italy, signed as a result of the Locarno Conference. His first article established "the preservation of the territorial "status quo" arising from the borders between Germany and Belgium and between Germany and France, and the inviolability of these borders ...". The second article obligated these countries "not to undertake any attack or invasion against each other and not in any case to resort to war against each other" {128} . The guarantee of observance of the contract was assigned to all its participants.

Thus, in the guaranteed pact one can clearly see a completely definite course characteristic of the foreign policy of England, France, and the USA. Its meaning was to insure these countries against German aggression and at the same time open the way for it to [38] the East, against the Soviet Union. It was this course that was later reflected in the Munich imperialist conspiracy.

The participants in the Locarno Conference plotted an aggressive war against the Soviet Union. But in the face of public opinion, they resorted to the false subterfuge that it was a war that would be undertaken by the Soviet Union. They met with great satisfaction the speech of German Foreign Minister G. Stresemann, who declared that if war breaks out against Soviet Russia, "Germany will not be able to consider itself indifferent and will, despite difficulties, fulfill its obligations ... Germany will not be able to avoid war if it starts. And then, playing on the anti-Soviet sentiments of the audience, Stresemann raised the issue of arming Germany {129}. Answering him, O. Chamberlain said: "Germany will become an ally of all the other member states of the League. Her strength will become their strength. Her weakness will be their weakness. All other states will be forced to help Germany, and those who disarmed Germany will have to arm her again . So Stresemann achieved what he wanted: the obligations of England and France, behind which the United States

of America was also behind, to ensure the armament of Germany. And how to use these weapons, in which direction to turn the muzzles of the guns - Stresemann had his own thoughts, which he was not going to share.

In Locarno, the representatives of Poland and Czechoslovakia, A. Skshinsky and E. Beneš, played a shameful role, signing arbitration treaties with Germany. The real meaning of the agreements was as follows: instead of guaranteeing the Polish-German and Czechoslovak-German borders, as was done with regard to the Franco-German and Belgian-German borders, the solution of all disputed issues was left to a permanent conciliation commission of representatives of both parties and representatives appointed by them. third states. Thus, conditions were created for the capitulation of the bourgeois governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia as soon as Germany again proceeds to the traditional "drang nach Osten" {131} .

Germany's arbitration treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia dealt a crushing blow to the system of alliances created after the First World War by bourgeois France not only against the Soviet state, but also in the interests of its own security from German aggression. In an attempt to preserve this system, the French government concluded alliance treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia in Locarno. The treaties provided for mutual assistance, but not against any German aggression, but only against the unprovoked use of weapons by Germany in its relations with one of the contracting parties {132} . This by no means ruled out a "peaceful" seizure by Germany of the countries of Eastern Europe or the passage of its troops through these countries to attack the USSR.

The newly appeared Locarno "peacemakers" were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The voices of the right-wing leaders of the Social Democratic parties joined the general choir that glorified Locarno. The Socialist Workers' International {133} declared the Locarno Conference "the first step towards the pacification of Europe". In contrast to this, the XIV Congress of the CPSU(b) perspicaciously noted that the Locarno "guarantee agreements" [39] ... in fact mean nothing more than the alignment of forces for a new war" {134} .

The immediate consequences of Locarno were the critical events of 1927, when England made a serious and extremely dangerous attempt to start a war against the Soviet Union with a united anti-Soviet front, although its formation was far from complete. But this circumstance did not bother British politicians. They believed that the provocations they had undertaken would set in motion all the forces hostile to the USSR and consolidate the role of England as the leader of the anti-Soviet front. In the same year, Trotskyists became more active in the USSR, going over to an open struggle against the Communist Party and the Soviet state.

On February 23, 1927, British diplomacy launched an offensive. She sent a note to the Soviet Union with fictitious accusations and a threat to break off trade and diplomatic relations. In April, with the express consent of the British and American ambassadors, the Chinese police raided the Soviet plenipotentiary representation in Peking. A month later, the British police made a similar raid on the Soviet trade mission in London and on the Anglo-Russian Cooperative Trade Society (ARCOS). On May 27, the British government broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. On June 7, at the instigation of British reaction, the Soviet ambassador P. L. Voikov was murdered in Warsaw. The governments of England and the USA encouraged Poland in every possible way to take military action against the USSR. American businessmen provided Poland with large funds for the purchase of weapons.

However, the decisive role in the war planned by British imperialism against the USSR was assigned to Germany. After the assassination of P. L. Voikov, the British Foreign Office asked the German Foreign Office whether the passage of British troops through its territory to the east would be allowed. Berlin was in no hurry to answer, realizing that such a passage of troops would inevitably draw the Germans into the war {135} . On July 23, 1927, Stresemann stated in the Reichstag that Germany did not intend to participate in a military campaign against the USSR and would remain neutral.

This position of Germany was due, on the one hand, to Soviet foreign policy, which was expressed in a number of important actions that counteracted the Locarno agreement, and on the other hand, to clashes of imperialist interests. One of the manifestations of these contradictions was the repeated statements by the German leaders in a closed circle that they would go only to such a war that would be beneficial to their country, and not to any other power, for example, England. The French leaders also assured the Soviet government that Britain would not be able to lead them onto the path of a break with the USSR.

England was never able to complete the creation of the anti-Soviet front and undertake a "crusade" against the USSR. The 15th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, in a resolution on the report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, noted: "... the correct policy of the Central Committee ensured, under the most difficult conditions of the reporting period, the strengthening of the international power of the USSR, the enhancement of the role of our country as a factor in international peace, the growth of the authority of the USSR as a center of world revolutionary movement" {136} .

Under the conditions of the world economic crisis that began in 1929, all the contradictions of imperialism were further aggravated. [40]A new plan arose in the ruling circles of a number of imperialist powers to resolve contradictions at the expense of the Soviet Union by way of war. The alignment of anti-Soviet forces in the camp of imperialism has undergone some changes. In connection with Britain's foreign policy defeats, anti-Soviet intrigues in Europe hastened to lead the ruling circles of France. In an effort to create a political bloc of European states against the USSR, the government and military command of France launched an active activity in the Baltic countries, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. French military missions systematically visited these countries, negotiated the unification of weapons and the supply of weapons, the training of military personnel, as well as the reorganization of the armies. Significant loans were provided for rearmament. The fascist dictator of Poland, Pilsudski, and the Rumanian reactionaries enjoyed

particular sympathy among the French imperialists. Poland and Romania received the largest loans and credits for the purchase of weapons. The French imperialists assigned a large role in the plans for the anti-Soviet war to the remnants of the White Guard rabble, which was hastily put on alert, retrained, and armed.

Again, with all its acuteness, the question arose of whether Germany would join the anti-Soviet front. People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR MM Litvinov, in a report at a session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR in December 1929, said: "... in Germany there are individuals, groups, organizations and even parties that aim to radically change the entire policy of Germany in the direction of anti-Soviet machinations. .." {137} The foreign policy of the USSR waged an active struggle for the preservation of good neighborly relations with Germany. This struggle was facilitated by the interest of German industrialists in trade with the Soviet Union, as well as the development of imperialist conflicts in connection with French plans for hegemony in Europe.

The aggravation of imperialist contradictions was also reflected in Italian-French relations. Italy made its own claims to participate in the leadership of Europe. British diplomacy played on these contradictions.

Japanese imperialism was intensively preparing for war. Like the German monopolists, the ruling circles of Japan hatched anti-Soviet plans, not wishing, however, that their implementation would benefit the United States and Britain.

Thus, in the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s there were two anti-Soviet "military alarms" {138} . In 1927, British reaction, and in 1930 French reaction, vigorously provoked an attack by a number of states associated with them on the Soviet Union. The main direction of the policy of England, France, and the USA, calculated on the mutual weakening of the Soviet Union and Germany by a war between them, on the destruction of Soviet power, was clearly outlined. The USA, Britain and France tried to pursue a similar line with respect to Japan.

However, thanks to the activity of peace-loving forces, primarily the Soviet Union, in both cases the war was prevented. At the same time, the "military alarms" organized by the imperialists had grave consequences for the cause of peace and largely predetermined the development of events on the road to World War II. [41]

With the growth of Germany's economic and military power and the growth of the predatory aspirations of its ruling circles, a corresponding program of action was developed, which the German leaders did not even consider it necessary to hide. Summing up the vast amount of information received, Vansittart, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of England, wrote on May 12, 1930, that the German government was striving to restore its country as a world power and colonial empire, to annex Austria, to rearm its army, and to change the Polish-German frontier {139} . British politicians consoled themselves with the thought that Germany would supplement this program with plans for a war against the USSR and stop there. But, as events have shown, the German imperialists went much further in their plans for the struggle for world domination.

The complicated situation in Europe, which diverted the attention of the capitalist governments, was used by the Japanese imperialists to prepare, and immediately launch a war against China, beginning it with the capture of Manchuria. The Japanese government decided to cover up the aggression with anti-Soviet slogans, counting on the benevolent position of its imperialist rivals. Japan's invasion of Manchuria was not just another local war, but was an integral part of those actions that represented a new stage in the emergence of the Second World War - the formation of its specific centers. The background to these events includes the Dawes Plan, the Locarno conference, and attempts at new anti-Soviet campaigns.

5. Ideological preparation by imperialism for new wars

The incessant arms race and the invariably aggressive foreign policy of state-monopoly capitalism created an increasingly tense situation on our planet. Analyzing it, V. I. Lenin wrote in 1920: "... new imperialist wars are already being prepared by the present policy of all bourgeois states — and not only are they consciously prepared,

but also follow with objective inevitability from all their policies...”
{140}

The imperialists of all countries assigned an enormous **role to ideology in preparing new wars**. At the same time, they not only relied on the historical experience of the exploiting classes, who always paid serious attention to the ideological preparation of war, but also carefully took into account some of the most important features of the new era, which led to a significant increase in the role of ideology in the life of human society.

Colossal masses of people, including those from the colonial countries, were drawn into the abyss of the First World War. In the course of it, at the cost of countless sacrifices, the working people came to a correct understanding of the causes of the origin of the war, the unrequited guilt of world imperialism for the torment and death of many millions of people, to the realization of their fundamental class interests, because “civilized country makes the governments expose themselves” {141} .

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution had world-historic significance for the growth of the political maturity of the working people of the entire world. The truth about Soviet power penetrated into the most remote corners of our planet. As early as March 1920, V. I. Lenin noted with pride [42]: “... our peaceful policy is approved by the vast majority of the world's population” {142}. The imperialists also became convinced of the great vitality of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism from their own experience in the process of armed intervention against the young Soviet republics, when, in the words of V. I. Lenin, “through agitation and propaganda, we took away its own troops from the Entente” {143}

In preparing for new wars, the imperialists took into account this sad experience for them. They, making extensive use of printed propaganda, radio, cinema, and other mass media, continued to diligently introduce the ideology of militarism in all directions, which was a prelude to the direct ideological preparation of the Second World War.

The imperialist bourgeoisie countered the inspiring influence of revolutionary ideas with its own ideology, including the propaganda of militarism.

Once upon a time, the bourgeoisie was quite proud of the fact that, in contrast to medieval ignorance and the cult of brute force, it proclaimed the victory of reason, the ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity. But those days are long gone. The reaction inherent in the epoch of imperialism in all spheres of social life was also established in ideology. "In civilized and advanced Europe," V. I. Lenin wrote on the eve of the First World War, "with its brilliantly developed technology, with its rich, comprehensive culture and constitution, such a historical moment has come when the commanding bourgeoisie, out of fear of the growing and the growing proletariat, supports everything backward, dying, medieval. The moribund bourgeoisie unites with all obsolete and obsolete forces in order to preserve the vacillating wage-slavery" {144}.

But the bourgeoisie is not only trying in the most cunning "recent" forms to galvanize the misanthropic ideas of the oppressors of past times, long condemned by all honest people, but so necessary to it. For the most effective impact on the consciousness of the people, while continuing to boast of its "objectivity", in reality it goes to a direct falsification of historical events, quite consciously bases its propaganda on direct deception, sophisticated, and sometimes gross lies. All this convincingly confirms the validity of the position put forward by V. I. Lenin back in 1914: "...bourgeois influences on workers never and anywhere in the world consisted only of ideological influences. When the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie on the workers falls, is undermined, weakens, the bourgeoisie is everywhere and always resorted and will resort to the most desperate lies and slander.

However, despite the anti-science and falsity of the basic premises of the bourgeois ideology, it would be a serious mistake to underestimate its danger since this ideology is implanted by representatives of the economically dominant class of capitalist states.

On the spiritual preparation of peoples for war, the capitalists threw the entire arsenal of bourgeois ideology - political and legal, philosophical, and religious, ethical, and aesthetic views.

Perversely interpreting the entire course of the development of human society, not only many historians, philosophers, lawyers, publicists, military theorists, but also statesmen of the bourgeois countries preached the cult of war and the army. Under the new conditions, the situation was repeated in which, as K. Marx wrote back in his work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "mustache and soldier's uniform" were proclaimed "the highest [43] wisdom of society and its mentors" {146} . This preaching was especially zealous in countries that were defeated in the First World War or considered themselves deprived.

In Germany, the philosopher O. Spengler, popular in those years, argued that war in general is an eternal form and the highest value of human existence, and the whole meaning of the state's existence consists allegedly in waging wars {147}. It was a military theorist. And the militarist-practitioner, General H. von Seeckt, glorified the militarism and aggression even more zealously: "I can say that militarism made Prussia and then Germany big and strong" {148}.

The cult of war literally permeated the fascist bible *Mein Kampf*. And in Hitler's secret memorandum, distributed in 1927 by the monopolist Kirdorf among the German industrial magnates, all dots were put over and: "In this world, the last decision in the economic struggle is not determined by the more or less significant activities of competitors, but, on the contrary, by the power of the sword...which should be thrown into the scales» {149}.

There are people in the world who can still say that the Nazi Fuhrer wrote this. But the "democratic" Foreign Minister Stresemann, in his cautious but numerous statements a few years before the Hitler memorandum, tirelessly asserted that "in the final analysis, big questions were always decided with the help of the sword" {150}.

In Japan in the 1920s, the formula "war is the father of creation and the mother of culture" was introduced in every possible way, the principles of "Hakko Ichi U" and "Kodo" {151} were widely

promoted, which, according to the definition of the International Military Tribunal, became "symbols of world domination carried out under assistance of military force" {152}. The results of the wars waged by Japanese imperialism in 1894, 1904 and 1914 were widely popularized in history textbooks, propaganda articles, and "scientific" works. They argued that Japan should experience "the beneficent wind of war" every ten years and that the absence of war in 1924 was the source of all the country's misfortunes. {153}. The cult of war and the army was also strongly implanted by religion; one of the most common Shinto characters {154} the sword appeared, and its worship occupied an important place in many ceremonies. Soldiers were diligently instilled with the ancient morality "busido" ("the way of the warrior"), which sang the loyalty of the samurai {155} to the emperor, which, as the command [44] believed, "would be the decisive condition for Japan's victory in the war against its opponents" {156} . In the draft instruction on "moral education" drawn up by the General Staff, it was said that "victory is given only to those who are imbued with the spirit of devotion to the emperor" {157}.

The position of Italian imperialism was expressed by B. Mussolini. He publicly stated that "fascism ... does not believe either in the possibility or in favor of permanent peace ..." {158}, advocated war and called on the Italians "to embrace the spirit and freedom of imperialist Rome" {159} . Stirring up militaristic psychosis, Mussolini told the army commanders on August 26, 1933: "War can break out suddenly, any minute, so you need to be ready for war not tomorrow, but now. We have always been and remain primarily a military nation. Since we have no fear of words, let's add - militaristic. And let's add - a militant nation! {160}

Although there were no mass standing armies in England and the USA at that time, militaristic propaganda assumed considerable proportions there as well. "History shows," W. Churchill wrote, "that war is the destiny of the human race. Except for only brief and occasional breaks, there has never been peace on earth. Before history began, the earth was full of murderous strife.

One of the important directions in imperialism's ideological preparation for new wars was the further incitement of nationalism and racism. In the course of the First World War, through the efforts of the monopolists, the military and their learned lackeys, chauvinistic passions in the warring countries were "kindled to the last degree" {162}. They did not subside even with the advent of peace.

Speculating on the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and relying on the reactionary traditions of Prussianism, the German militarists hammered into the heads of the burghers the ideas of pan-Germanism, the "chosenness of God" of the German nation, designed to regain its former power. In March 1924, Stresemann said at the congress of the German People's Party in Hannover that the national idea should be raised in the hearts of all Germans and be a "moral weapon" in their struggle for their future {163}. This was all the more possible because the German petty bourgeois, a representative of the middle strata, at one time went through the school of Wilhelmine education, which eradicated democratic ideas from the consciousness of the Germans by all means, covered everything reactionary in German history with romantic gilding, and instilled a spirit of arrogance towards other peoples. . From the deafest village school to the university, the Germans were told: "All the greatest military feats in history are Prussian, all the greatest works of art are German, the greatest inventions and the most outstanding scientists are German, the strongest gymnasts are German, the best industry is German, and the most intelligent workers are the Germans" {164}. It was on this nationalist anti-Versailles yeast that the Nazi Party grew, making the widest possible use of wild chauvinism and racism to prepare the people for a new world war. [45]

In Japan, numerous fascist military organizations, the press, theater, and cinema were engaged in propaganda of nationalism and racism. The textbook "Nippon Shintoron" ("Theory of Japanese Shintoism") stated that the Japanese emperor is a deity, the Japanese are a race of god-men, all other people are beings "reptiles", "like worms"; the Japanese "holy empire rises above everything in the world in its sole

and unattainable superiority", and all other states are "ephemeral as the dawn" {165}.

In an effort to arouse great-power feelings, Mussolini spoke in May 1927 of the "necessity" to create such a powerful aviation that "the roar of its engines could drown out any other noise on the peninsula (Apennine. - Ed.), And the shadow from its wings would block the sun over our land. And then, between 1935 and 1940, when, it seems to me, a decisive moment in the history of Europe will come, we will be able to make us listen and finally recognize our rights.

In Horthy Hungary, a kind of racism of its own, so-called Turanism, was vigorously propagated, ultimately aimed at "substantiating" the aggressive claims of the Horthy clique for dominance among the peoples of the Danube basin. Under Piłsudski's regime, nationalism blossomed in full bloom in Poland.

Propaganda of chauvinism and racism was conducted in peculiar forms after the First World War in the USA, Britain, France, and other capitalist countries.

Geopolitics occupied a special place in imperialism's ideological preparation for new wars. This most reactionary theory was engendered by imperialism at the dawn of its history. F. Ratzel in Germany, G. Mackinder in England, A. Thayer Mahan in the USA, J. Kjellen in Sweden laid the foundations of geopolitics at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, as rightly emphasized in Marxist literature, geopolitics is an interstate phenomenon of the era of imperialism {167}.

After the First World War, geopolitical views were especially strongly propagated in Germany; a special journal "Zeitschrift für geopolitik" is published, books by A. Dix, O. Maulla, A. Grabovsky, N. Krebs, K. Haushofer {168} are published. The first place among these preachers of aggression belonged, undoubtedly, to the former general of the Kaiser's army, and then professor of geography at the University of Munich, Haushofer, who helped turn geopolitics into an integral part of the fascist ideology. Through his former adjutant and student R. Hess, he establishes contact with Hitler from the very beginning of the Nazi movement, then visits him in the Landsberg

prison and exerts a strong influence on him. It was from Haushofer that Hitler adopted the idea of the conquest of "living space" by Germany {169}, which became one of the fundamental principles of the National Socialist worldview and played a sinister role in the ideological preparation of fascist aggression. [46]

Geopolitical views as a means of "justifying" the preparation of war were also spreading in other countries. The Japanese doctrine of the "sphere of mutual prosperity" was aimed at capturing all of Asia. Mussolini declared that Fascist Italy "must expand or suffocate" {170} . In Horthy Hungary, in the press, on the radio, in oral propaganda, there was a slogan calling for a revision of the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, a revision of the post-war borders {171}.

To stir up militaristic feelings in Germany, a wide and varied colonial propaganda was carried out. Having lost their overseas possessions, the German monopolists did everything possible to prepare the population of the country for the struggle for the return of the lost and the acquisition of new colonies. The leading role in this incendiary activity was played by German entrepreneurs, businessmen, officials, and military men who had returned from the colonies; according to data for 1921, their number reached 200 thousand {172}

The main center of colonial propaganda was the German Colonial Society, which had existed since the 1880s. In 1926 it had 250 branches in the cities of the country and had 30,000 members; it was headed by the former governor of German East Africa, deputy of the Reichstag G. Schnee and active colonial businessman T. Seitz {173}. This society was surrounded by a widely ramified network of affiliated colonial organizations. Soon after the First World War, the "German Society of Participants in the Colonial War", the "Union of the Memory of Colonial Warriors", the "Colonial Economic Committee", the "Colonial Union of German Nationalists", the "Women's Union of the Red Cross for Germans living in the colonies", "Association for German settlements and travel". In the autumn of 1922, they entered the newly created "Colonial Imperial Association".

All these "societies" and "alliances" made their contribution to the preparation of a new war. Already in 1920, about 4 million signatures {174} were collected under an appeal demanding the return of the colonies. In Rendsburg, a special school prepared German girls for life in overseas countries {175} . For colonial propaganda, the press was widely used, sometimes the most unexpected means were used, up to the manufacture and distribution of special coasters for beer mugs, equipped with colonial slogans. In 1928, colonial associations and business economic unions published a "General German Colonial Programme" signed by leading representatives of German monopoly capital. It openly put forward demands for a redistribution of the world.

Almost all the bourgeois parties of the Weimar Republic declared in their programs the need to recognize Germany's right to economic and political activity in the colonies {176} . In September 1924, in a note to the Council of the League of Nations, the government of the Weimar Republic put forward a demand for the return of its colonies to it as a precondition for Germany's entry into the League of Nations, and three months later, a new memorandum of this government stated that Germany had views on the territories [47] located in mandated administration {177} . The German ruling circles sought to win over the sympathies of the peoples of the East, putting forward demagogic slogans: "Germany and the East, deceived by Versailles", "Germany and the East are victims of imperialist arbitrariness" {178}.

Throughout the first post-war decade, colonial propaganda was also carried out in Italy and Japan. In England, France, and the USA, along with this, measures were taken to hold on to the colonies, up to and including armed struggle against the peoples who were trying to break free from the yoke of colonialism. And when the position of the colonialists became more difficult, they—already in the 1920s— resorted to organizing collective colonialism. An example of this is the coordination of efforts and mutual assistance of France and Spain in strangling the Rif Republic in 1925-1926. {179}.

The falsification of history, the history of the First World War in particular, occupied a large place in imperialism's ideological preparations for new wars. The imperialists, taking into account the ever-increasing importance of historical knowledge for shaping the consciousness of the people, worked on a broad front in all capitalist countries to use history for the political needs of the day.

First of all, the German imperialists sought to eradicate revolutionary memories and traditions from the people's consciousness. German bourgeois historiography had considerable experience in this shameful affair. After all, it was she who called the glorious 1848 the "crazy year" ("Das tolle Jahr"). In the 50s and 60s of the 19th century, according to K. Marx, "reactions in Germany managed to completely eradicate the memories of 1848-1849" {180}. The November Revolution of 1918 provoked an even greater wave of hatred among the imperialists. To slander, distort its essence and role in the history of the country, present the revolution as an "element of madness", force it to be forgotten, eradicate revolutionary traditions from wide circles of working people by any means, preserve and strengthen militaristic traditions - such was the desire of reactionary German historians. "Gegen Demokraten helfen nur Soldaten" ("only soldiers help against the democrats") is the main rule, the basic principle of the "research" of history by German reactionaries from 1848 to the present day.

The militaristic revanchist spirit permeated historical research concerning any period of German history. The well-known historian G. Ritter wrote about Martin Luther that "he is ourselves: an eternal German." When analyzing the era of the liberation wars of the early 19th century, Ritter unambiguously tried to call on the Germans to the same decisive struggle against capitalist competitors in modern conditions. With particular zeal, German historians study the era of Bismarck. In 1919, the third volume of Bismarck's Thoughts and Memoirs was published, since 1924 his Collected Works have been published; memoirs of other politicians, diplomats, military figures of those times, as well as studies and articles are widely published. This whole flow of literature was supposed, on the one hand, to convince the broad masses of the correctness of the militant policy of

the "Iron Chancellor" and of German imperialism as a whole, and on the other hand, to arouse nationalist feelings in every possible way. And it is no coincidence that the same Ritter report on Bismarck in 1928 ended with the words: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt" ("Germany, Germany is above everything, above everything in the whole world").[48]

At the epicenter of the ideological struggle was the history of the First World War, especially the question of its perpetrators. The general line of the imperialists was described in 1927 by the American researcher G. Laswell: "There should be no hesitation in relation to who should be hated. The reason for the war should not be put forward neither by the world system of managing international affairs, nor by the stupidity and ill will of the ruling classes, but exclusively by the predatory instincts of the enemy. Crime and innocence must be geographically demarcated, and all crime must be on the other side of the border" {181} .

It was according to this recipe that the victorious countries wrote in the Treaty of Versailles that the only culprit of the war of 1914-1918. is Germany (the German delegation was told that the matter was not subject to discussion). Speaking in March 1921 in London, Lloyd George said: "For the Allies, German responsibility for the war is a basic provision. This is the basis on which the edifice of the Treaty of Versailles was erected. If this provision is rejected, or if a concession is made here, the treaty will be destroyed. We therefore wish to make it clear once and for all that the Allies must regard German guilt as an established fact .

Of course, this decision was contrary to the truth because the organizers of the First World War were the imperialists of all countries. But even German bourgeois historians and politicians, opposing the thesis of the Treaty of Versailles about the guilt of Germany, fought not for the truth, but for the justification of German imperialism and the creation of ideological prerequisites for the preparation of new wars by it. K. Kautsky wrote in 1920 that "Germany did not plan war" and "tried to avoid it" {183} . President Hindenburg said in 1927 that "war was for us the last means of self-defence of the whole people against enemies in the world by means

of heavy sacrifices. With pure hearts we came to the defense of the fatherland, and with pure hands the German army wielded weapons" {184}. Thus, a kind of united front was created from the right-wing Social Democrats and bourgeois historians to the elderly field marshal. They all tried to present German imperialism as an immaculate lamb and shift the entire responsibility for the world war either to Russia or to France and England.

Three and a half months after Hitler came to power, the official Nazi Party frankly wrote: "It should not be forgotten that German historical science undertook a struggle against the Treaty of Versailles. Its task is to forge historical weapons against the lies about the perpetrators of the war, about the "corridor" and Upper Silesia, for the annexation of Austria and for the struggle for the Rhine" {185}. This statement cannot be regarded merely as an exposition of the views of fascism on the role of history. It not only set tasks for German historical science, but also cast a retrospective look at the activities of historians during the period of the Weimar Republic. Most of them in the 1920s, fulfilling the social order of German imperialism, concentrated all their efforts on ripping open the Versailles Treaty at all seams, educating the Germans in the spirit of nationalism, chauvinism and revanchism. [49]

Widespread anti-Versailles propaganda on the question of the perpetrators of the war was combined with an equally false interpretation of the reasons for the sad outcome of the war for Germany. The defeat of the country was attributed to the notorious "DolchstoYa" ("dagger in the back"), allegedly thrust by leftist forces.

By cultivating the myth of the invincibility of the German army and the correctness of the General Staff, of the genius of the generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff, reactionary German historiography made its considerable contribution to the preparations for a new world war. About the true nature of the work of the historians of Weimar Germany, one of the prominent ideologists of German imperialism, General Keim, frankly wrote at the end of 1920: "The old militarism ... we are not in a position to revive. You don't have to deceive yourself about this. But we must nurture and nurture the true military spirit. The spirit of Tannenberg, which led us to victory

in countless battles, is the same spirit that in August 1914 inspired all Germans and now inspires many hundreds of thousands of compatriots... To do this, we must constantly remind the people, in all its strata, of the heroic military exploits of the world war,{186} .

The revival of militarism in Germany began primarily with the reconstruction and wide dissemination of its ideology and traditions in the state apparatus, school, and Reichswehr. As General Müller, who worked in the military-political department of the Reichswehr ministry in the 1920s, testifies, "traditions in the Weimar Republic were cultivated in order to prepare for revenge" {187}. A significant part of the workers of German culture and science, including historical ones, played an extremely unseemly role in relation to their own and other peoples, supporting, developing, and propagating militaristic traditions and ideology. If the Prussian teacher was said to have won the battle for the creation of the German Empire under Bismarck, then the reactionary authors of the period of the Weimar Republic bear a great responsibility for the fact that they ideologically prepared the youth for aggression against other peoples, for countless victims of the world war.

Propaganda of the cult of war, incitement of nationalist passions, revanchism, attempts at geopolitical "justification" of aggressive desires, falsification of history for militaristic purposes - all this did not represent anything completely new. Similar methods of ideological preparation for wars, in one form or another, on one scale or another, were used by all the exploiting classes before. Characteristic of the interwar period was that war propaganda became even more frank and intrusive, its scale and scope increased sharply, and its technical capabilities improved significantly.

One of the essential differences in imperialist propaganda before the First World War and after it was that bourgeois propaganda resorted more and more to demagoguery, to unsubstantiated promises, in order to draw the masses along without paying attention to the fact that it's the elements were not only in logical connection with each other, but even contradicted each other. The prominent bourgeois researcher of the history of German fascism, W. Hofer, wrote: "The ambiguity in the program provisions allowed the National Socialists

to simultaneously appear in both anti-capitalist and anti-proletarian garb, portray themselves as a force both restorative and revolutionary, call themselves nationalists and at the same time socialists. [fifty]As a result, the party (Hitler's. - Ed.) managed to acquire allies for itself in various social strata of the German people " {188}.

A qualitatively new direction appeared in the system of ideological preparation for war in the interwar period—anti-communism, anti-Sovietism. It immediately became the main, dominating one in the entire ideological preparation for wars and embraced all the imperialist countries without exception.

After the accomplishment of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the world-historic victories of the young Soviet government, the bourgeoisie was mortally "intimidated by "Bolshevism", embittered at it almost to the point of insanity ..." {189} . Having reigned supreme for many centuries, the bourgeoisie, in the rumble of the armed uprising in Petrograd, in the victorious march of the Red Army regiments, for the first time heard the sounds of funeral bells for themselves as a class. And from that moment on, she passionately desired the destruction of Soviet power, world Bolshevism. B. Colby, US Secretary of State in 1920-1921, frankly declared in the early 1930s that the American policy of non-recognition of the Soviet state from the very beginning "was based on the definition of Russia as a hostile state" {190}. And in May 1931, he explained in the press: "When I speak of Russia as a 'hostile state', I only affirm what was freely recognized and nowhere denied" {191}. W. Churchill, declaring during the debate in the English Parliament in 1926 that he hoped to live to see the day when Soviet power would be overthrown in Russia and a "civilized government" {192} would be created , expressed not only his own, but also the world's cherished dream imperialist bourgeoisie. In this case, Churchill expressed only what had long been the cherished dream of his like-minded people, who not only reasoned, but also began a concrete alignment of forces for the implementation of anti-Soviet plans.

On January 15, 1920, the commander of the American occupation forces in Germany, General G. Allen, wrote in his diary: "Germany is

the state most capable of successfully repelling Bolshevism." Further, he unequivocally deciphers his understanding of this "reflection": "The expansion of Germany at the expense of Russian territory would divert the Germans to the East for a long time and thereby reduce the tension of their relations with Western Europe" {193} .

Such a "social order" of the Anglo-French-American imperialists fully corresponded to world anti-communism, the anti-Soviet plans of the German military. Literally on the second day after the November Revolution - November 10, 1918 - Chancellor Ebert negotiated by phone with the Supreme Command of the Ground Forces on joint actions against Bolshevism and the left-wing radical part of the German working class {194} . On the same day, Field Marshal Hindenburg demanded in a special telegram from officers and soldiers to take all measures in order to "prevent the spread of terrorist Bolshevism" {195} . About the "necessity" of fighting communism, General Trainer [51] wrote to Hindenburg in 1923. {196}. On March 15, 1929, Hitler declared: "Every officer should know that Marxism has destroyed the old empire" {197} . In February 1930, the head of the military administration, General von Hammerstein, wrote: "The Reichswehr is decisively fighting against the line of communism, the Third International" {198} .

In the general anti-Soviet choir, the voice of the Japanese militarists was also heard. In 1928, Alkawa Takaharu authored the book *On Modern Ideas in the Army*, which formed the basis for the indoctrination of the Japanese soldier. In this book, the author argued that it was no longer possible to completely protect the army from the ideas of socialism and communism, and therefore army educators should "boldly clash with Marx and deal with the communists" {199} .

The world bourgeoisie sought by any means to destroy the nascent socialist world as quickly as possible. This was primarily aimed at its economic, political, military, and ideological activities.

In the field of ideology, the first commandment of the imperialists was to prevent the "ideological infection of Bolshevism" from entering their countries, to hide from the people the very fact of the

successful practical implementation of the ideas of scientific socialism. The bourgeoisie once tried to ignore the emergence of Marxism. Then this attempt failed. But the doomed classes, as a rule, do not heed the lessons of history well. The imperialists "concluded among themselves a real conspiracy of silence, fearing above all the spread of truthful news about the Soviet Republic in general, its official documents in particular" {200} .

But, as you know, ideas travel without visas, and, despite all the obstacles, the truth about the Soviets reached the working people of the capitalist countries. The bourgeoisie mobilized everything it could to fight against the ideas of socialism: the press, cinema, radio, theater, and literature. And everywhere there was a lie, everywhere the bourgeois press "in millions of copies of their publications poured disgusting slanders on the Bolsheviks ..." {201} , "there is not that absurd and monstrous accusation that would not be raised against us" {202}. But perhaps the most beloved were the allegations of "red militarism." In January 1921, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR G. V. Chicherin was forced to send a telegram to all Soviet diplomatic representatives abroad stating that "the campaign of lies about our supposedly aggressive intentions against our neighbors is becoming so unbridled that we cannot continue treat it with indifference, and the real purpose of inciting the peoples living peacefully in our neighborhood against us is becoming more and more obvious" {203} .

As the successes of the Soviet government, the scope of the slanderous campaign increased even more. In an interview with an employee of the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) in July 1925, G. V. Chicherin spoke of the most typical phenomenon of the political camp that opposed us - about forgeries that entered the system and turned into a craft. They were an integral part of the campaign of lies and slander launched against the USSR by its opponents and became especially fierce during these years. The interview listed 20 forgeries discovered in a short time, and on the basis of [52] incontrovertible facts, it was concluded that government-affiliated bodies were mostly quite knowingly using such falsifications and paying for them {204} .

The leaders of the right-wing socialists continued to faithfully serve their imperialist masters. In the resolution of the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in the summer of 1927, it was noted that "along with the bourgeoisie, the so-called international social democracy, together with the "ultra-left" renegades of communism, is taking over the ideological preparation of the war against the USSR: all-round discrediting of the USSR as a state ; slander about degeneration, kulak politics ... and Bonapartism; cries about "red imperialism", about the alleged incendiary role of the USSR, which is "guilty" of violating the peace carefully "guarded" by the League of Nations ... - all this should serve as a cover and justify the class war of the imperialist bourgeoisie against the proletarian state and distract the workers of Europe from fulfillment of the proletarian duty of defense by all measures of the USSR"{205} .

As for the workers who were members of the Social Democratic parties, a significant part of them did not support the foreign policy course of their right-wing leaders and took a positive position in matters of protecting peace. The anti-war actions of the Social-Democratic workers flowed into the general mainstream of the struggle for the preservation of peace.

Thus, the first world war had hardly ended when international imperialism began to threaten humanity with a new world war. This danger was generated both by the aggravation of all the contradictions of capitalism in the period of its general crisis, the intensification of the uneven development, and by its reactionary domestic and aggressive foreign policy, the growth of armaments, and militaristic ideology, due to the very nature of imperialism. The systematic propaganda of anti-communism in all capitalist countries has greatly contributed to the creation of a militaristic frenzy. It was in an atmosphere poisoned by the spirit of anti-communism that such a monstrous social phenomenon as fascism could appear. Today the whole world knows what a fatal role the ideas of anti-communism played in the preparation and unleashing of the Second World War.

The imperialists actually began practical preparations for a war for a new redistribution of the world immediately after the end of the first worldwide armed clash. "The war is over, long live the new war!" — this is the motto of state-monopoly capitalism.

Fascism is the darkest offspring of imperialism

Socio-political roots of fascism and the way it came to power

Fascist movements and regimes arose after the First World War as an expression of the aspirations of the most reactionary, chauvinistic circles of finance capital for an open terrorist dictatorship. This trend was traced by V. I. Lenin long before the appearance of the first fascist groups and dictatorships, when the concept of "fascism" did not even exist. In his work "Imperialism, as the Highest Stage of Capitalism", he revealed the patterns inherent in state-monopoly capitalism, which lead to such dictatorships, showed the inextricable connection between the strengthening of the state machine of imperialism and the unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus for repressions against the proletariat and the broad masses of the people as in monarchical as well as in the freest, republican countries. Describing imperialism as the last stage of capitalism, Lenin wrote:{206} .

Fascism is the brainchild of the general crisis of capitalism, the crisis of the entire socio-economic, political, and ideological structure of bourgeois society. The monopoly bourgeoisie, and in a number of cases the non-monopoly bourgeoisie, fearing for the fate of their class domination, saw in fascism the force that must deal with the revolutionary masses, and above all with the working class {207} .

With the rapid development and aggravation of the crisis of the "tops", on the one hand, and the growing mobilization and revolutionary determination of the "lower classes", on the other, the state power of the bourgeoisie becomes shaky. At such a moment a situation is created when the ruling classes are no longer able to govern in the old way, and the working class and its allies are not yet ready to take decisive joint action to overcome the crisis [54] by revolutionary means. The ruling class, in order to strengthen its power, resorts to the methods of terrorist dictatorship, one of the

varieties of which is fascism. Of course, betting on fascism is a political risk, but experience shows that the ruling circles take such a risk.

Fascism is a terrorist dictatorship of monopoly capital. Its goal is to strengthen the class rule of the big bourgeoisie, prevent a revolutionary explosion, and suppress the working class and its organizations.

Fascist movements and dictatorships arose in the 1920s and 1930s in those countries where the influence of the general crisis of capitalism was especially strong and its resolution by revolutionary means was imminent.

In the epoch of imperialism, the interests and ties of the monopolies and banking capital are intertwined most closely and intricately, not only on a national but also on an international scale. Fascism, wherever and wherever it spread, acted under the flag of chauvinism. But his desire for world domination did not interfere with the international relations of the monopolists. The monopolies of the fascist states consisted in innumerable cartel agreements with the largest monopolies of other capitalist countries, especially with those of them that were of an international character.

The close economic ties of the monopolies gave rise to political, diplomatic, and military cooperation between the fascist governments and the governments of other bourgeois states.

In the field of ideology and propaganda, the unity of the class interests of the monopolists was manifested in the fact that the bloody reprisals of the fascists against everyone who opposed their arbitrariness were not condemned, but praised by politicians and the press of "democratic" states. The Vatican did the same. Pope Pius XI declared in 1929: "Mussolini has been sent down to us by providence; he is a man free from the political prejudices of liberalism" {209} .

The fascist movement before the seizure of power is terrorism, illegal militant organizations, anti-parliamentarism, national and social demagoguery. After the establishment of the fascist

dictatorship, this means the elimination of all other parties from the political arena and, in particular, the merciless liquidation of all workers' organizations, a regime of terror, a "totalitarian" state.

V. I. Lenin noted that there is a completely definite police rule, which is expressed in the following: "Against the people's revolution, against the class struggle, you cannot rely on the police, you must also rely on the people, also on the classes" {210} . In other words, in addition to the police and the army, the reaction is always trying to create for itself a more or less broad social support, enlisting the declassed elements to its side in order to form ultra-right organizations and armed detachments from them.

Fascism has created a mass social base for itself, using the methods of demagoguery and deceit. Lies have accompanied fascist dictatorships throughout their history, marked by crime and blood. Fascism's extensive use of social demagoguery {211} distinguished it [55] to a certain extent from other bourgeois parties. If the latter, as a rule, hushed up the crisis of the capitalist system, then the fascists "boldly" criticized it, offered their own way out of the crisis, and even demagogically announced the elimination of classes and class differences, the introduction of social equality.

Hitler in his book "Mein Kampf" wrote: "The National Socialist state does not know "classes". Politically, it knows only citizens who enjoy exactly the same rights and bear the same duties . Fascist leaders vilified the "plutocrats", promised to eliminate "percentage slavery", forever put an end to economic crises and unemployment. Speculating on the desire of the masses for socialism, fascism called itself a revolutionary, socialist movement - "National Socialism".

Fascist demagoguery had a pernicious influence on certain sections of society, especially those that experienced the severe consequences of the onset of big capital, economic crises: the petty and middle bourgeoisie, the unemployed and lumpen proletarians who lost their perspective and desperate people.

The servants of the counter-revolution went to the fascist party: officials, the military, police agents and provocateurs, guards, and gendarmes. But not only they constituted the social basis of fascism.

Fascism has succeeded in enveloping comparatively broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie and part of the workers with its nets. Some idea of the social base of fascism can be obtained from the official data on the composition of the Hitlerite party. In 1930, the ranks of the German Nazis consisted of: "independent owners" (owners of industrial and commercial enterprises, bankers, monopolists, and kulaks) - 20 percent (of the entire composition of the party), peasants - 11 percent, major officials - 13 percent, employees (chief image of the former military) - 21 percent. In 1930, industrial workers made up only 20 percent of the Fascist Party, while their share in society was 45 percent.[213] .

Bourgeois democracy seemed dangerous to the fascists, and in preparing for war they attacked its institutions with fury. To please the industrial and financial sharks who organized military production, fascism introduced a system of state regulation similar to that carried out by the governments of the warring capitalist countries during the First World War. The implementation of the regulation of production and distribution represented the further development of state-monopoly capitalism, the creation of a war economy.

In seizing power and fulfilling the social order of the bourgeoisie, the fascists tried, first of all, to exterminate the advanced part of the working class, to crush its organizations.

Long before the Second World War, the fascist leaders planned further intensification of repressions and massacres, as they knew that the population of their countries did not want war and would have to face a strong anti-war movement. The main executioner of Nazi Germany, Himmler, in one of his speeches to the leaders of the officer corps of the Nazi Wehrmacht frankly stated: "In the coming war we will have not only a land front on the ground, a sea front on the water, an air front in the sky, we will also have a fourth theater of war in Germany. This is the basis from which we must proceed . [56]

A characteristic feature of fascism is gross lawlessness, inhuman reprisals against the working masses, opponents of the fascist

regime, champions of the preservation of peace. Fascism relied everywhere on nationalism, chauvinism, racism, and in a number of countries on revanchism. It is no coincidence that fascist dictatorships established themselves precisely where national arrogance, the preaching of hatred for other peoples, most of all had a detrimental effect on political life and ideology, and where all these traits, fueled by defeat in the First World War, gave rise to chauvinism.

Marxist parties have given a precise characterization of the class essence of fascism since its inception. The Fifth Congress of the Communist International, held in 1924, wrote in its resolution: "Fascism is one of the classic forms of counter-revolution in the period of the collapse of the capitalist system and the proletarian revolution - especially where the proletariat, fighting for power, but not having revolutionary experience and not having a revolutionary leading class party, he was unable to organize a proletarian revolution and bring the masses to the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship.

Fascism is the fighting weapon of the big bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletariat... Its roots are mainly nourished by those middle strata of the bourgeoisie who are doomed by the capitalist crisis, as well as by elements declassified by the war, like former officers, etc. , partly even some elements of the proletariat, bitterly disappointed in their hopes for a revolution and embittered" {215} . This was a generalization of the events that took place in Italy.

In the summer of 1935, the 7th Congress of the Communist International resolutely opposed the underestimation of the fascist threat both in individual countries and throughout the world. The Congress noted with great dismay that fascism had become an international menace, that fascism was the most dangerous and most cruel enemy of the international workers' and democratic movement had ever faced. Mobilizing the communists against any underestimation of fascism, the congress denounced the "dangerous illusions of the automatic collapse of the fascist dictatorship" and urged working people to be vigilant in relation to every step of the

fascist movement. The congress gave a detailed description of fascism, its essence, social base, its policy, and class purpose.

In the report of G. M. Dimitrov "The offensive of fascism and the tasks of the Communist International in the struggle for the unity of the working class, against fascism" and in the resolution of the congress, it was extremely clear about the socio-political roots of fascism and its class function. These documents revealed the complete inconsistency of the assertions of the Social Democratic leaders that fascism is supposedly the power of the insurgent petty bourgeoisie, standing above the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. "No," Dimitrov said. — Fascism is not a supra-class power and not the power of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen proletariat over financial capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. This is the organization of terrorist reprisals against the working class and the revolutionary part of the peasantry and intelligentsia. Fascism in foreign policy is chauvinism in its crudest form,{216} .

The rise of fascism to power was not the mere replacement of one bourgeois government by another. That was the replacement of one state [57] form of the class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—by its other form—an open terrorist dictatorship. Fascism came to power in a mutual, sometimes bitter struggle with the old bourgeois parties or with a certain part of them, in the struggle of different groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie, in the struggle in the fascist camp itself, which sometimes amounted to armed clashes, as was the case, for example, in Germany and Austria. However, in all cases the way for fascism was paved by the ruling bourgeois circles. The West German philosopher K. Jaspers reasonably notes: "The stream would not have broken through the dams if the people who were in decisive positions had not opened the floodgates for it" {217}.

Whichever way fascism develops and whatever means it uses to seize power, it has always and everywhere been characterized by the most ferocious attack of capital on the working masses, frenzied reaction and counter-revolution, unbridled chauvinism, and an aggressive policy.

This characterization of fascism, given by the 13th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and the 7th Congress of the Comintern, reveals not only the nature, but also the basic class function of fascism.

Fascist dictatorships were characterized by the fusion of the forces of the monopolies, the state machine, the military, the gangster assault squads, the robber ideology into a single mechanism directed against the working class and all the liberation movements of mankind. "No fantasy is able to invent what the oldest activist of the CPSU E. D. Stasova wrote, "what was carried out and carried out every day in concentration camps, in the barracks of attack aircraft, in a huge prison into which fascism turned Germany, the bearers of the new "national German culture" {218} .

The entire policy of fascism, both internal and external, was determined by the interests of the monopolies. Thus, for example, banks, coal, steel, chemical and other monopolies exerted a decisive influence on the colonial policy of Nazi Germany.

There is a lot of irrefutable evidence about the patronage of fascism by the official authorities. The Italian anti-fascist historian G. Salvemini tells the following. In 1920, Giolitti's liberal cabinet, which had given the social reformist Bonomi the Minister of War, "believed that the fascist offensive should be used to break the socialists and communists" and "therefore allowed the leaders of the army to supply the fascists with guns and trucks and allowed retired officers and reserve officers to command them" {219} .

In Germany, fascism grew to an even greater extent than in Italy, under the guidance and solicitous tutelage of the old regime, and especially the military authorities. From the very beginning it was supported, financed, and subsidized by representatives of the big bourgeoisie. Back in 1924, the trial of Hitler-Ludendorff and the investigating commission of the Bavarian parliament discovered facts of financial support for the Nazis from the big bourgeoisie.

The head of the Steel Trust, F. Thyssen, and the head of the Rhenish-Westphalian Coal Syndicate, E. Kirdorf, persuaded the leaders of the German Ruhr capital to agree that all coal and steel [58] concerns

would pay a mandatory tax to the electoral fund of the National Socialists. During the presidential election in 1932, Thyssen handed over to the National Socialists more than 3 million marks {220} within a few days . Without this help, Hitler's agitation in 1930-1933. could not take such fantastic proportions.

In National Socialism, the monopoly bourgeoisie had a ready tool to carry out its goals. The Nazi Party gave her what she needed most: a mass base, without which it was impossible to stay in power, and most importantly, to think about revenge. The German monopolists dreamed of a time when the hateful strikes would cease, red flags would disappear from the streets, and it would be possible without hindrance to directly prepare for a new world war.

German imperialism handed over political power to the National Socialist Party in January 1933 because it saw it as the most suitable instrument for carrying out its plans for the conquest of world domination.

In many capitalist countries the leading role has passed to warmongers and the most rabid representatives of imperialism. But even in most of those countries where the bourgeois-parliamentary system was preserved, there was a further strengthening of political reaction and fascism.

The ruling circles of Britain, France and other capitalist states not only did not come out to fight the mortal danger that fascism represented for democracy and peace, but most of them were themselves infected with the conviction that capitalism could be strengthened only with the help of fascism and war. They hoped that the war for which the fascist bloc—Germany, Japan, Italy—was clearly preparing for it—would be a war against the Soviet state they hated.

The rise of fascism expressed the striving of the imperialist bourgeoisie to put in power a force that would be able to carry out direct material and, no less important, ideological preparations for a new world war.

2. Fascism in Italy

Italy emerged from the First World War so weakened that her territorial claims were little taken into account. The mood of revenge and infringed national pride became an important factor in the development of political life in the country.

The internal situation of Italy was characterized by serious socio-economic upheavals. The war disorganized the economy and finances. The state budget, which rested heavily on the people, did not cover the costs with its revenues. Inflation increased, and the rate of the paper lira fell. The public debt has reached enormous proportions.

Soldiers demobilized from the army did not find work. The growth of unemployment was complicated by the fact that emigration from the country, which always diverted part of the labor force and stopped during the war, did not immediately resume with the onset of peace.

Class contradictions and the class struggle sharply escalated. The events of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia found [59] a wide response among the Italian working masses. The first post-war years (1918-1920) were for Italy a time of strong revolutionary movement. Its climax was the mass protests of workers in August-September 1920, when Italian metalworkers, and then workers in other industries, began to seize factories and factories throughout the country. These events brought the proletariat close to solving the question of power.

In the agricultural regions of the country, a struggle broke out for the division of the landlords' lands. The strike movement of farm laborers assumed wide proportions. In almost every village there were so-called "chambers of labor" and "red leagues", which regulated wages, the length of the working day of farm laborers, sought to eliminate feudal remnants in relations between landlords and peasants.

September 1920 showed that the class struggle in Italy, which had escalated to the limit, threatened to overturn the capitalist system.

But the Italian Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labor did not show sufficient revolutionary spirit and determination at that time, did not lead the movement, did not lead the proletariat from seizing individual factories and plants to seizing state power. Their Right opportunist elements tried to extinguish the revolutionary movement, to draw the proletariat onto the path of struggle for partial reforms. But the centrists who dominated the party, frightened by the scope and nature of the struggle, did not stand at the head of the masses. Left to their own devices, deprived of leadership, the workers could not seize power. The movement was at an impasse and stopped.

The bourgeoisie perfectly understood why it managed to hold on. "Italy was in danger of a catastrophe," wrote the influential bourgeois newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. "The revolution did not happen, not because someone blocked its way, but because the General Confederation of Labor did not want it" [221] . But the ruling classes learned a serious lesson. They realized that the uprising of the proletariat could not always be "defeated by non-resistance," as Minister of War Bonomi [222] characterized the past events , calling for more decisive action.

The desire of the monopolists to maintain their class rule at any cost was reflected in the fact that they hastened to organize in advance forces that could prevent a new outbreak of the revolutionary struggle, carry out a preventive counter-revolution and, moreover, use the growing revolutionary anger of the people for their own class goals. Fascism has become such a force, the spokesman for the interests of the most aggressive circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie, a weapon in its hands in the struggle against the proletariat, the working masses, and the progressive intelligentsia.

B. Mussolini became the organizer of the first fascist detachments, and then the leader of the fascist movement in Italy. Expelled from the Socialist Party at the beginning of the First World War, he was one of the leaders of the movement for Italy's entry into the war. The "socialist" label he continued to wear helped him infiltrate the working environment. With the money of the French bourgeoisie, who were interested in dragging Italy into the war, Mussolini

founded his newspaper The People of Italy (Popolo d'Italia), the pages of which during the First World War were filled with noisy militaristic propaganda. "Neutrals do not move events, but obey them. Only blood gives run to the ringing wheel of history" {223} . [60]

In these pompous phrases, the whole of Mussolini, with his cheap rhetoric and demagoguery, designed for people who are exalted and not experienced in politics. "He who trembles too much for his own skin will not go to fight in the trenches, but you will not meet him on the barricades" {224} - this is Mussolini's usual political speculation.

The same combination of violent nationalism with social demagoguery was characteristic of the activities of the fascist organization created by Mussolini in March 1919, called the "Union of Struggle" ("Fascio di combattimento") {225} . At first, the organization numbered only a few dozen people, but gradually began to expand its ranks, mainly due to former front-line soldiers.

At first, the Nazis recruited their supporters under the guise of foreign policy slogans and tried to present themselves as defenders of "national interests." The starting point of this propaganda was complaints about the "spoiled victory" ("Sconfitta vittoria"). Mussolini and other fascist leaders portrayed the matter as if the whole world (and most of all the rulers of the Entente countries) was infected with hatred for Italy, which was surrounded by enemies, and the government was showing criminal weakness and lack of will. The fascist bosses assured that only fascism could put an end to this, only it would enable Italy to gain dominance over the Adriatic Sea. "If any Italian government in the past made shameful concessions," wrote the fascist Gargolini, "this does not mean that the Italian nation will agree to give up the Adriatic Sea - mare nostrum (our sea. -Ed.) - at the discretion of the all-powerful usurpers and usurers. Greece, Yugoslavia, and Albania hate us. But we are hated even more by the great powers, who ... mock us, bully, and weaken us. We managed to climb out of the quagmire of the military Caporetto. Let us also triumph over our diplomatic Caporetto." {226} .

From curses addressed to former allies, the fascists moved on to curses at the "rotten democracy", "incapable and corrupt parliamentary talkers and demagogues", who were declared guilty of all external and internal political troubles in Italy.

Fascism tried to recruit to its side, first of all, the most unstable elements of the youth who returned from the front, among whom there was a sharp political stratification. The most conscious part of it was looking for a way out of the difficult economic situation of the country in the class revolutionary struggle. Another significant part, mainly from petty-bourgeois families, having achieved various ranks and honors in the war, did not intend to engage in the modest work of clerks, teachers, technicians, petty lawyers, especially since Italy had long suffered from an overproduction of workers in these professions. Crackling phrases, spectacular gestures, absolute political unscrupulousness - everything that the fascist leaders had in abundance attracted these young people, ready for anything, just not to pull the strap of a prosaic existence.

But not only some of the youth became easy prey for fascism. A severe material and moral crisis was experienced by the middle strata of the population, the petty bourgeoisie. With the depreciation of the lira, accumulated savings, acquired position [61] and income turned into a ghost. The future seemed hopeless. The material insecurity of the numerous bourgeois intelligentsia reduced them socially to the level of the lumpen proletariat. The war increased the already large amplitude of political fluctuations in this motley environment.

Fascism took advantage of the unstable economic position of the petty bourgeoisie and the political vacillation in its ranks in order to turn it into an instrument of counter-revolution and carry out plans to strengthen the capitalist system. Slogans for the protection of small property, demagoguery directed against the "sharks of capitalism" who had profited from the war, created for fascism the appearance of a commonality of its interests with the interests of the middle strata and the petty bourgeoisie. Unsettled by rising high prices, disillusioned with liberalism, seeking peace and material well-being, bewitched by the specter of "great Italy", the mass of the

petty bourgeoisie and the middle strata of the population rushed to fascism, which seemed to them the savior of the nation and the only means of establishing "order" in the country.

Fascist businessmen recruited into their detachments both peasants who returned from the war and found the economy ruined during their long absence, and workers who found the gates of factories locked due to the reduction in military production and joined the ranks of the unemployed.

Fascism established close ties with groups of the rural bourgeoisie and the landowners, who were afraid of the growth of the peasant movement, which threatened to eliminate their privileges. At the same time, fascism began to create its own mass base among a part of the middle peasantry, frightened by rumors about the expropriation of land, the movement of farm laborers and agricultural workers. To fight the hated "Red Leagues", the rural bourgeoisie and landowners called in the fascists, and they acted as an instrument of reaction in the Italian countryside. This struggle soon unfolded in all the agricultural districts of Italy. The agrarian movement was especially brutally suppressed in Bologna and Ferrara.

A sharp strengthening of fascism began after September 1920, when he was supported by the big bourgeoisie, and he placed his armed detachments at its disposal. Pogroms of workers and democratic organizations began, beatings and murders of political and trade union leaders, terror and violence reigned in the country.

The communist party of Italy, which took shape in January 1921, took the path of a decisive struggle against fascism. In a number of places, committees of proletarian defense, detachments of "people's daredevils" were created. They were joined by anti-fascists, regardless of class and political affiliation. However, this embryonic form of a united anti-fascist front did not lead to unity even in the labor movement. The leadership of the Italian Socialist Party for a long time adhered to the tactics of "passive resistance" in relation to fascism. The effectiveness of the actions of the young communist party was reduced because of its attempts to lead the anti-fascist

movement exclusively along the path of struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The unorganized anti-fascist front was opposed by the fascist party with its armed detachments of blackshirts, who enjoyed the full support of the bourgeois-democratic government, the military authorities, the police, the courts, and the big bourgeoisie. The military authorities provided weapons, and professional officers trained the gangs and directed their operations. The General Staff issued a circular in October 1920 inviting divisional commanders to support fascist organizations. The workers and peasants were disarmed, and the Nazis openly carried weapons. The police, at best, remained passive, but more often directly [62] supported the fascists. The courts pronounced harsh sentences on the workers who were attacked by the Blackshirts, who were acquitted.

The well-known American journalist Mowrer wrote: "In this atmosphere of murder, violence and arson, the police remained "neutral" ... Officials shrugged their shoulders, while armed gangs, on pain of death, forced the socialists to resign or arranged formal trials, sentencing their enemies to corporal punishment, exile, or execution ... Sometimes the carabinieri and the royal guards openly acted together with the fascists, paralyzing the resistance of the peasants. The peasants would have coped with the fascists alone, but they were helpless in the fight against the united fascists and the police .. The Italian historian Salvemini also noted the unity of fascists and militarists. He wrote: "The professional military, who supplied the fascist gangs with weapons and officers, introduced their mentality into the fascist movement, and with them methodical cruelty, which was not characteristic of the political struggle in Italy until 1921. It was the military specialists who transferred to the fascists their principle of strict hierarchy. Without their help, the fascist armed detachments could never have been created, and the organization of the fascist party would not have differed in any way from the organization of any other Italian party .

The army and government bodies knew about the intentions of the Nazis to seize power. On October 17, 1922, the head of the army information service reported: "Mussolini is so sure of victory and

that he is the master of the situation that he even foresees the first steps of his government. It seems that he intends to carry out the coup no later than November 10, but possibly November 4" {229} .

However, the government did not take any measures to stop the Nazis on the way to seizing power. Indeed, it was difficult to expect this after almost two years of successive "liberal" and "democratic" governments in Italy pandering and helping the fascists. The open transfer of power into the hands of fascism took place in 1922. On October 28, a fascist coup was carried out, which Mussolini called "the great march on Rome." With this, the Duce wanted to create the appearance that the fascist detachments had to break the armed forces that opposed them. In reality, everything happened differently. Fact's government, which had already negotiated with the fascists, resigned. Mussolini received a proposal from the king to form a new government, and the "great campaign" against Rome was expressed in the fact that on October 30, the Duce arrived in the capital of Italy in a sleeping car.

Immediately after the coup, despite the preservation of parliamentary forms, two new state institutions appeared: in December 1922, the "Great Fascist Council" (BFS) and in January 1923, by royal decree, the legal recognition of the fascist militia created a year ago was secured, which from now on became known as the Volunteer National Security Militia (DMNB). The BFS was organized on the basis of the directorate of the fascist party with the addition of fascist ministers and some fascist leaders, personally appointed by Mussolini, who became the chairman of the BFS. This council controlled bills before they were submitted to Parliament, the activities of the government itself. With the creation of the DMNB, Mussolini sought to achieve the predominance of the executive [63]power in the face of the fascist government over the legislature in the person of the king and parliament. The transfer of the DMNB to the subordination of Mussolini strengthened his personal power.

After the fascist coup, the communists and socialists organized separate demonstrations of the working people, mainly strikes. The aggravation of the political situation took place in the summer of

1924. The reason for the mass action of broad sections of the working people was the murder of the socialist deputy D. Matteotti by the Nazis. The deputies of the opposition parties withdrew from parliament and formed the so-called "Aventine Bloc" {230} . The Communist Party offered the liberal-democratic and socialist leaders of the bloc to unite and begin the fight against fascism. But this time too no decisive action was taken, and the fascists quickly succeeded in gaining control of the situation.

In January 1925, Mussolini announced his firm intention to curb any opposition by force. This was the signal for the start of a new fascist offensive aimed at eliminating the remnants of bourgeois-democratic freedoms. In June, at the Congress of the Fascist Party, Mussolini proclaimed the desire of fascism to transform the moral and political consciousness of Italians into a monolithic and totalitarian consciousness: "We want to fascist the nation ... Fascism must become a way of life ... there must be Italians of the era of fascism, as were, for example, Italians the Renaissance." Here, for the first time, the desire of fascism to create an empire {231} was announced .

Of particular importance in strengthening the fascist dictatorship was the law of April 3, 1926, which established government control over the trade unions. After the assassination attempt on Mussolini at the end of October, on November 5, 1926, a law was issued dissolving all "anti-national" parties, which formally completed the transition to a one-party system. In April 1927, the so-called Labor Charter was adopted, which established the corporate principle of the structure of the state and society in Italy. Instead of class trade unions, corporations are being created that unite workers and entrepreneurs in each branch of production. These corporations, which were under state control, were to become the cornerstone of fascist statehood.

Candidates for parliament could now be nominated only by corporations. After the approval of the candidates by the "Great Fascist Council", they were included in the voting lists. Thus, the opposition did not have any opportunities to oppose fascism in the parliamentary field.

The mechanism of the complete fascist dictatorship included party, as well as trade union, youth, student, women's, and sports organizations. Like a web, they entangled all layers and groups of the population of the fascist state and society.

At the heart of the fascist doctrine lay the idea of a "nationwide power", which allegedly stood guard over "common interests." Based on this idea, the Nazis demanded complete submission from the people. "Everything is in the state, and nothing is outside the state" - these words of Mussolini are a kind of formula for fascist totalitarianism.

Italian fascism was the first of such regimes to plant a system of mass psychosis, the madness of an exalted crowd that believed in the fascist Duce and lost the ability to think independently. Such a mass psychosis was used to incite bloodlust, justify atrocities and violence. [64]

Fascism meant a specific form of state-monopoly capitalism, which provided the fascist leadership with the opportunity to act in the interests of the entire elite of monopoly and financial capital. Indicative in this connection is the intensification of the process of merging the state and capitalist economic apparatus. The fascist leaders who were in power, using their position, themselves became big industrialists and financiers. Of the 400 deputies of the fascist parliament elected in 1929, 175 held paid posts in the administrative councils of large joint-stock companies; one of the deputies collaborated in 43 joint-stock companies, another in 33, etc. {232} .

State-monopoly regulation was carried out by the fascist regime in the interests of economic preparation for war with the aim of realizing the aggressive plans of Italian imperialism to create a huge empire on all the shores of the Mediterranean Sea with its transformation into an "Italian lake". The philosopher D. Gentile, who put himself at the service of fascism and wrote the main parts of the "Doctrine of Fascism", officially attributed to Mussolini, speaking about the functions of the fascist state, stated: "For fascism, the desire for empire, that is, for national expansion, is a vital manifestation. The reverse, that is, "staying at home," is a sign of

decline. The peoples who are rising and resurrecting are imperialists" {233} .

Thus, the terrorist functions of the fascist state, all its organizational and economic measures were associated with predatory foreign policy plans. As domestic violence grew, the fascist state became more and more aggressive in foreign policy, stepped up military preparations for the creation of an empire.

In Germany, these characteristic features of fascism were demonstrated on an even larger scale.

3. German fascism

The situation in which Germany found itself after the First World War was in many respects similar to the conditions prevailing in Italy. But with all the similarities, there were also significant differences in the depth and severity of the events that took place. They were explained by specific socio-economic and political factors.

A feature of the historical development of German capitalism was that from the second half and especially from the end of the 19th century, the German economy grew at a faster rate than in other capitalist countries of Europe. V. I. Lenin noted that "the rapid development of capitalism in Germany was the development of a young and strong predator..." {234} . The effect of the law of uneven economic and political development of capitalism.

German imperialism entered the world arena at a time when all the chairs at the capitalist "food table" were occupied. Germany, "which developed economically in the 20th century faster than the rest of the European countries, and which is especially 'offended' by the division of the colonies" {235} , came out with militant demands for the redivision of the world. The Italian monopolists, although indignant at the "spoiled victory", belonged [65] to the camp of winners. Germany, on the other hand, was defeated and for a time expelled from the ranks of the great imperialist powers.

The revolutionary situation that arose in Italy was brought to naught by the passivity of the leadership of the socialist party, by its unwillingness to lead the revolutionary struggle of the masses. In

Germany, the November Revolution of 1918 was betrayed in the literal sense of the word by right-wing social democracy. Its leaders became the soul of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. In January 1919, the Social Democrats Ebert and Scheidemann, who headed the government, demanded an armed defeat of the revolutionary workers. On behalf of the government, they entrusted this dirty business to their "Parteigenosse" G. Noske, who, accepting the assignment, declared: "Someone must become a bloody dog" {236} .

With the help of the Right Social Democrats, one of the most vile atrocities was committed - the murder of the leaders of the German proletariat, Karl Liebknecht, and Rosa Luxemburg. "There are no words to express all the vileness and meanness of this butchery, allegedly committed by the socialists," wrote V. I. Lenin. "Obviously, history has chosen a path in which the role of the "working lieutenants of the capitalist class" must be brought to the "last line" of brutality, baseness, and meanness" {237} .

In Germany, in contrast to Italy, in the process of suppressing the revolution, direct cooperation was established between the right-wing Social Democracy and the command of the Reichswehr. Right-wing socialist politicians felt themselves in the strongest dependence on the military command and, at every revolutionary outbreak, turned to the armed forces for help and support.

In Germany, as in Italy, there were the same fairly large social strata that could easily succumb to the demagogy of the Nazis. These are sections of the petty bourgeoisie, declassed elements, officers demobilized from the army in connection with the end of the First World War and not adapted to life in peace. The new order did not attract them, they hated its leaders - the "people of November". They longed for the restoration of the old order.

These feelings were especially acute among those who found themselves outside the ranks of a greatly reduced army. They could not and did not want to adapt to civilian life, were uprooted from their familiar environment, felt isolated, and betrayed, surrounded by a hostile world. They wanted action, action at any cost, no matter

who they were against—the Bolsheviks, the Slavs, the Reds, the speculators, the Jews, the government, or the victorious powers.

German monopoly capital, having crushed the revolution at the hands of the Social Democrats and the military, did not feel such an acute need as in Italy to create some kind of new political force capable of immediately carrying out a preventive counter-revolution. Militaristic traditions, rooted for centuries in the entire social and political life of Germany, played a role in this. In Europe, there was no country like Prussia, where the military craft would be fanned with such a romantic halo, and military service so honorable, where militarism and everything connected with it would be erected on such a high pedestal. Germany was united around Prussia with iron and blood. The aggressiveness of imperialism was multiplied by the militancy of the Prussian Junkers, who retained many privileges in the German Empire. Bismarck's words: "We have the best army,[66] Corps! No one compares to a Prussian lieutenant!" - relentlessly hammered into the heads of the Germans. Every petty official or shopkeeper who put on an officer's uniform during the war years believed that the brilliance of the Prussian officer caste, and at the same time its privileged position in society, was already extending to him. The officers tried to use any pretext to keep their privileges and ranks.

The center of attraction for the declassed elements at first became the paramilitary "voluntary" formations created by the Reichswehr in circumvention of the Treaty of Versailles as their reserve and bearing a semi-fascist character. They were used by the military command as an important means of putting pressure on the government, increasing its dependence on the military.

The Entente powers tolerated a clear violation of the Treaty of Versailles in view of the insistent assurances of German statesmen that such formations were necessary to fight the revolution. The desire at all costs to prevent the victory of the democratic forces of the people, to use the German military to fight the revolutionary movement not only in Germany, but also abroad, led the Western powers themselves to encourage the restoration of German militarism.

Many fascist and semi-fascist organizations that arose after the war, often uniting only a few dozen people, had no independent significance and were often considered by the Reichswehr command as a screen for creating new military and paramilitary formations. In one of these organizations, which called itself the "German Workers' Party", the army command in Munich sent Hitler as a political agitator. He was a prosperous bourgeois, hiding from military service for a long time, and during the war years he did not advance in the army further than the rank of corporal {238}. Beginning in 1919, Hitler received the support and patronage of Captain E. Röhm, the chief of staff of the military commandant of Munich. In a short time, he took a leading position in an organization called the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Exposing the falsity of this name, E. Telman wrote: "...behind their words "nation" and "socialism" hides the brutal mug of capitalist exploiters" {239}. The National Socialists chose their party symbol and flag: a black swastika in a white circle on a red background. This combination, apparently suggested by the Reichswehr, was supposed to preserve the white, black, and red colors of the old imperial flag, and the emblem indicated a family connection with the nationalist military formations, the symbol of which was the swastika. But the main color of the flag was red. He was to emphasize that the party is "National Socialist" and "workers". The new flag played a significant role in propaganda. All posters and leaflets of the Nazis were red, their trucks were decorated with scarlet flags. For the same propaganda purpose, the Nazis dressed as workers.

In February 1920, the party program appeared. It was nationalist, racist, revanchist. The program called for the creation of a "greater Germany" through the seizure of lands and colonies, the annulment of the Versailles and Saint-Germain treaties, which they sewed Germany territories in the east and west, colonies and forbade its unification with Austria. The racism of the program was expressed in the requirements that only persons of German blood could be citizens of the German state, be allowed to decide questions of legislation and leadership of the state. The social demagoguery of the Nazis was reflected in the promises contained in the program: to abolish unearned income and "percentage slavery", to confiscate all

military profits, to nationalize trusts, to ensure universal participation in the profits of concerns, to introduce the death penalty for usurers and speculators.

In speeches about his program, Hitler emphasized the articles demanding the annulment of Versailles and the creation of a great Germany "from the Neman to Bratislava, from Königsberg to Strasbourg", and hysterically screamed about the elimination of "the dominance of the Jews."

In December 1920, Hitler purchased the racist newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, which became the central party organ. The money for this purchase was provided in part from the funds of the Reichswehr.

In 1921, the National Socialists created paramilitary formations called assault squads - SA (*Sturmabteilungen*). Under the leadership of the officers, these detachments soon became a great counter-revolutionary force. They had their own cavalry, artillery, technical means.

According to the famous German historian E. Niekisch, "any person with the instincts of a killer and a sadist was in the SA in his place. The more brutally he behaved, the more he was respected; here you could be a beast to your heart's content... In the SA, all criminal inclinations were given complete freedom. The barracks of the storm troopers were the focus of all conceivable vices: parasites, drunkards, life bankrupts, thugs, homosexuals, murderers prepared their darkest deeds here, with the help of which it was necessary to "awaken Germany" [240] .

At the same time, a close connection was established between the Nazis and General E. Ludendorff. As the Nazi party grew, its leader showed more and more independence, refusing unconditional submission to the Reichswehr.

At the same time, Hitler finds patrons among the monopolists. Already in the early 1920s, a group of industrialists formed in Bavaria, who staked on the Nazi party and allocated significant funds for it. But even in its "Munich period" the leadership of the

Hitlerite party was no longer limited to Bavaria and established contacts with influential representatives of the German monopoly elite.

The kings of coal and steel in the Rhine-Westphalian region, as well as the Prussian Junkers, who hated even the very word "democracy", considered it necessary to put an end to the republican order, the "policy of implementation" of the Treaty of Versailles and, through a military coup, establish a militaristic dictatorship as a step towards the restoration of the monarchy.

In 1923, the domestic and foreign political situation in Germany sharply worsened. In January of this year, France, under the pretext of Germany's failure to fulfill the terms of the Versailles Treaty and its non-payment of reparations, occupied the Ruhr. The heart of German industry was paralyzed. In response, the German government proclaimed a policy of "passive resistance". Germany was hit by severe social upheavals. Subsidizing the policy of "passive resistance" has led to hitherto unknown inflation. Workers and employees could not even buy bread with their wages. Speculation has reached unprecedented [68] proportions. All the foundations of the social and economic life of the country were undermined.

The Communist Party put forward the slogan of a united front against the invaders and domestic capitalists and the creation of a workers' and peasants' government. Soon workers' governments were formed in Saxony and Thuringia. On October 23, the heroic Hamburg Uprising began. But the Social Democrats blew up the united front. Ultimately, the counter-revolution won.

The National Socialists took advantage of this situation to strike at the republican government and establish a military-terrorist dictatorship. On November 8, the General Commissioner of Bavaria von Kahr was supposed to speak at a rally of honorary citizens of the city of Munich in the Bürgerbräu beer hall. By order of Hitler, the SA, reinforced by the "voluntary" military detachments still in Bavaria, surrounded the beer hall and at the same time occupied some other public buildings. As soon as Kahr began his speech,

armed stormtroopers led by Hitler burst into the hall, who, jumping on a chair, fired at the ceiling for greater persuasiveness, and then proclaimed the program - the formation of a "national government". In an ultimatum form, he invited Kahr and General Lossow, commander of the Reichswehr troops in Bavaria, to join him. Ludendorff, who was right there, said, turning to Lossow: "You will do it, Lossow." To which he replied: "Your Excellency's desire is an order for me."

However, when Kahr and Lossow returned to their residence, they received a categorical order from Berlin to put an end to the rebellion. Therefore, they told Hitler and Ludendorff that the word given under the gun did not oblige them to anything, and demanded that they lay down their arms. Hitler and Ludendorff the next day brought their supporters to a demonstration to show "who is the boss in the city." But in the center of the city they were met by the fire of the police, reinforced by parts of the Reichswehr. In a matter of minutes it was all over. Frightened to death, Hitler and Ludendorff managed to escape {241} . Thus ended the Bavarian attempt to "march on Rome" ingloriously.

The big German bourgeoisie, which had extensive experience in suppressing the revolutionary uprisings of the working class, feared that an attempt at a reactionary coup could provoke such a rebuff from the revolutionary forces that was dangerous to itself, and under those conditions did not dare to establish an open fascist dictatorship.

While denying immediate support to Hitler, the monopoly bourgeoisie nevertheless decided to keep him as a reserve for the future. Hitler and his accomplices, when brought to trial, were sentenced to a short prison term. Already at the end of 1924 they were released.

While in prison, Hitler molded from various reactionary works the book *Mein Kampf* - the bible of National Socialism and its program. Here there was admiration for Prussian militarism; the desire to eradicate Marxism; bestial hatred for the peoples of Europe, primarily for the French and Slavs as "inferior" and "degenerate"; a

call to return to the traditions of the Teutonic Order and its policy of "drang nach Osten"; anti-Semitism, brought to the point of pogrom persecution, racist discourses about the "master race", which accumulated the views of the imperialist ideologists of different countries; the mystical idea of the "Third Reich", designed to dominate all peoples. Hitler's program proclaimed a legitimate and necessary war for [69]the assertion of the dominance of the "superior race" over all other peoples. The expansionist plans of German imperialism found their expression in this program.

The inhabitant of Germany, by virtue of the upbringing he received and the entire system of ideological influence, was very malleable to the phenomena of mass psychosis, and the Nazis played on this. The German tradesman, the philistine, the very one who was so hated and branded with anger and contempt by K. Marx and F. Engels, yearned. He lacked a deity in the form of an emperor, whom he could worship, whose images would hang before his eyes, at the thought of which he could freeze with delight. Heinrich Mann in the novel "The Loyal Subject" in Diederich Gesling brought out the image of a German burgher and colorfully painted a picture of psychosis and excitement around a person who personifies sole power: "Intoxication, stronger, more wonderful than what beer can give, lifted him above the ground, carried him through the air. He waved his hat high above the heads of the crowd, in an atmosphere of seething enthusiasm... There, under the triumphal arch, power itself rode on a horse, with a stone face and sparkling eyes. The power that tramples us, and we kiss the hooves of its horse... It entered our blood because obedience is in our blood. We are just an atom, an infinitesimal molecule of her spit... To live in her, to be a particle of her, merciless to all who are not with her, and to rejoice, even if she tramples on us, because this is what she justifies our love!{242}

The title of Mann's novel "The Loyal Subject" has become a household name for the German philistine who was the backbone for the most reactionary undertakings of the rulers of Germany. The Nazis counted on such "loyal subjects" not without reason.

Gradually the Hitlerite party was restored in Bavaria. In the northern regions of Germany, G. Strasser was engaged in its reconstruction, seeking an autonomous position in relation to the Bavarian center. In Berlin, J. Goebbels, who had defected from Strasser to Hitler, acted as a Gauleiter. He was tasked with propaganda and force to win over the workers of the capital to the side of Nazism {243} .

Hitler dressed his SA in a new, brown uniform, introduced not a military, but a fascist salute, in 1925 he organized the SS (Schutzstaffeln) - special security detachments to protect his own person and reprisals against his opponents {244} . His party continued to grow. In 1926 it numbered 17 thousand, in 1927 - 40 thousand, in 1928 - 100 thousand, in 1929 - 178 thousand, in 1930 - about 380 thousand, and by the end 1931 - already more than 800 thousand people {245} . This growth was largely due to the absorption of many racist and nationalist groups, dozens of which existed in various parts of Germany. The remnants of "voluntary" military organizations, which went underground after their formal dissolution, poured into the Nazi armed detachments.

The Fascist Party in Germany has become the center of attraction for all reactionary, racist and anti-Semitic organizations. Her fanatical dynamism attracted both student youth and old soldiers looking for "heroic" deeds in battles with political opponents. [70] The police turned a blind eye to the adventures of the fascist thugs. The SA detachments underwent special training for street fighting. The slogan was put forward: "The street is our trench." The youth, who had heard enough about the exploits of German soldiers at school, were thrilled with happiness that they could show their courage to the people along with the "front-line soldiers".

The Nazis took vigorous measures to earn the confidence of big business. During the referendum of 1926 on the question of whether or not to reimburse the house of Hohenzollern and the sovereign princes for the value of the property confiscated from them after the November Revolution, they resolutely took the side of the monarchists. To explain this, they again resorted to social demagoguery, declaring that they defend the principle of private property, in the

preservation of which, they say, artisans, skilled workers, and the lower strata of civil servants are interested.

The bourgeoisie appreciated the behavior of the Nazis in this important political campaign. The leaders of trade and industry in Hamburg invited Hitler to speak at their meetings. He chose as the subject of his speeches the burning question for the monopolists of the restoration of Germany as a great power, demanded the complete eradication of Marxism, made it clear that only the National Socialist Party could fulfill this task. "Bismarck was revered," Hitler said. - Why? The masses love masculinity because they are feminine; they want to be led, and they do not want to have a leader who would tell them: this can be done in one way, it can be done in another way, and perhaps in some other way. The masses want a man who, stamping his boot, says: this is the right way." {246} .

All this appealed to representatives of big business. In April 1927, Hitler was invited to a meeting with 400 Ruhr businessmen at the Krupp villa. Thereafter, he and his party began to receive regular funding from large industrial monopolies and banks associated with international business and political circles. Big business recognized the ability of the Hitlerite party, if necessary, to turn into a massive support for the open dictatorship of monopoly capital. The end of capitalist stabilization was approaching, a storm of economic crisis was approaching, the first signs of which appeared already in 1928-1929. In this situation, the German monopolists, who felt the revival of the economic and military power of their country, dreamed with particular force of such a dictatorship, which by extreme violence would crush internal resistance and open the way to revenge. Hitler seemed like a good fit for this. "We engaged him" {247} , - F. Papen said about him.

Many Western authors, whitewashing bourgeois democracy, deny the continuity that connected the Weimar Republic with the Nazi Reich. This view is exposed with the utmost precision in the program document of the Central Committee of the SED, approved by the second plenum of the Central Committee in April 1963, "An Outline of the History of the German Labor Movement." It says:

"The fourteen-year history of the Weimar Republic has proved that on the paths of formal bourgeois democracy, which covers the dictatorship of monopoly capital, it is impossible to protect the interests of the working class and solve the vital problems of our people. History of the Weimar [71]the republic was not a history of democracy serving the interests of the people. It was the history of the formation of imperialist, anti-democratic forces of finance capital and militarism and their policy, which, hiding behind the bourgeois-democratic facade of the Weimar state, was aimed at destroying democracy and establishing an open fascist dictatorship over the German working class and the entire German people. The history of the Weimar Republic has shown that the rule of imperialism and genuine democracy are in incompatible antagonism .

The relationship of monopoly capital with its fascist offspring became more and more solid, which determined the characteristic features of Hitlerism.

In the political sphere, a course was set for an open terrorist dictatorship of big German finance capital, for the rejection of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and its replacement with a new form of power—bloody fascist tyranny as an extreme means of suppressing the working-class movement and unleashing aggressive adventures.

The German fascists pursued the goal of reducing the people to the level of a silent and blind instrument of the monopolists. To deceive the people, the Nazis called themselves nationalists and socialists. They were even ready to throw handouts to the masses from the table of monopoly capital, especially by conquering and plundering other countries. But in fact, striving to seize foreign territories, enslave the European nations, including the German one, and achieve world domination, the Hitlerite party acted as an imperialist, predatory, oppressive party.

The ideology of the Nazis, the main component of which was extreme anti-communism, found expression primarily in the barbaric racial doctrine, in the theory of insufficient "living space" for the Germans, in wild chauvinism. It was the focus of all the most

reactionary, pseudo-scientific and anti-humanistic theories put forward in the interests of the ruling exploiting classes.

The theory of “total war”, which became the official military doctrine of fascism, testified that the Nazis were not going to distinguish between the army and the civilian population of the country that was attacked. They deliberately prepared the destruction of cities and villages, the massacre of the civilian population, up to the physical liquidation of entire peoples, the deportation of able-bodied men, women, and adolescents to hard labor in Germany.

The most important characteristic features of German fascism in the field of economy include: its desire to establish state-monopoly methods of capitalist economy, the predominant development of the war economy, the implementation of a wide program of military measures that require the involvement of a large number of labor (the construction of highways, etc.).

One of the characteristic features of German fascism is a firm alliance with militarism. The Nazis planted in the country the cult of the army, the cult of war, extolled the military, violent methods of solving issues of domestic and foreign policy. They aggravated such a vicious tradition of German militarism as overestimating their own forces and underestimating the forces of the enemy. This determined the adventurism of the plans and actions of the Nazis. The extreme reactionary nature of German imperialism resulted in an alliance of dark forces, fascism, and militarism, created by it. [72]

4. Fascism in other countries

At the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism, the desire of the big bourgeoisie to establish a fascist dictatorship manifested itself not only in Italy and Germany, but also in a number of other capitalist countries, expressed in the activation of ultra-right organizations and groups. However, the choice by the ruling circles of the form of their rule—bourgeois-democratic or fascist—depended on many factors, among which the balance of power of the struggling social classes was of paramount importance.

In those countries where the development of the revolutionary movement did not pose a direct threat to the dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie, it preferred to preserve the traditional bourgeois-democratic forms of government, assigning the role of its reserve to ultra-right and clearly fascist organizations and groups. This was the situation in England, the United States of America, and also in Czechoslovakia, where the monopolies actively contributed to the development of fascism, but the majority preferred to do without a fascist dictatorship. This by no means ruled out that another, smaller part of monopoly capital was pushing the ultra-right to carry out a coup d'état in its interests. Consequently, the choice of the form of state government of the bourgeoisie was also influenced by the struggle in its own ranks. But many groups of the big bourgeoisie in England and the United States of America were clearly sympathetic to Italian and German fascism, studied its experience with unremitting attention, which they intended to use in the event of a dangerous turn of events for them. And on the international, and not only domestic, level, the monopolists saw in fascism their class ally, their reserve. Thus, the American right openly warned that Mussolini "may be needed to save the country from the American equivalent of Lenin." {249}.

There were also countries in which the monopolists made their choice in favor of fascism, but were unable to carry it out due to the powerful resistance of the working class to the attempted fascist coup. So, for example, in France, numerous ultra-right organizations (Crosses de la Roque, French Action, French Solidarity, Patriotic Youth and their youthful and sports affiliates) had a large number of weapons, including aircraft, and did not need funds. They even received subsidies from special government funds, and many ministers either secretly belonged to fascist organizations or were closely associated with them. With the support of the Daladier government, the French fascists launched an armed coup attempt in February 1934. This attempt met with such a rebuff from the working masses, that the frightened bourgeoisie changed its orientation: the government ordered the municipal guards and the police to take part in the liquidation of the rebellion. Subsequently, there were numerous fascist provocations, to which, however, big

business was wary. These provocations were rebuffed with increasing force by the French working people. The French Communist Party led the fight against fascism. Around it, a broad anti-fascist Popular Front was formed. The French Communist Party led the fight against fascism. Around it, a broad anti-fascist Popular Front was formed. The French Communist Party led the fight against fascism. Around it, a broad anti-fascist Popular Front was formed.

Fascist dictatorships arose only in a few states, taking various forms depending on the balance of class forces, historical, social, and economic conditions, national [73] features, and even the international position of a given country. Thus, fascism was an international phenomenon, and the struggle against it inevitably became international, presupposing the unity of the actions of progressive forces. Along with complete fascist dictatorships, there were such reactionary-terrorist regimes, which were characterized by only a part of the features characteristic of fascism. In accordance with this, they were called differently: fascist, monarcho-fascist, semi-fascist, military-dictatorial. Sometimes there were names generated by local conditions, for example, the sanitation regime[250] in Poland. According to the historians of the Polish People's Republic, some features of the sanitation "either brought it closer to fascism, or prepared the ground for it" [251] .

To study the social processes of the capitalist world in the interwar years and the origin of the Second World War, it is extremely important to identify the common and specific features of the reactionary-terrorist dictatorships of that time. First of all, naturally, the question arises of their class content. Basically, it was the same everywhere - a form of power of big capital and landowners. A characteristic example was the behavior of the big bourgeoisie and landlords in Poland in 1926, when the Pilsudschiki carried out a "campaign against Warsaw." 180 representatives of the big capital of Poland, united in the "Central Union of Polish Industry, Mining, Trade and Finance", signed a special statement of strong support for the coup. The land magnates made the same statement at their congress, held in October 1926 at the estate of Prince Radziwill.

In contrast to Germany and Italy, in a number of countries the decisive role in the establishment of fascist or semi-fascist dictatorships belonged to external forces. The difference between fascist groups was often determined by their foreign policy orientation. Military-dictatorial regimes in some countries of Latin America arose at the behest and under direct, sometimes even military, pressure from the United States. In the countries of South-Eastern Europe, for a long time there was a struggle for power between fascist organizations oriented towards France or England. After the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, the pro-German reactionary forces of the countries of this part of the continent acquired a decisive role. Most of the fascist regimes in the small countries of Europe turned into direct allies and accomplices of Nazi Germany.

Unrestrained terror against progressive forces, the sharpest class hatred for revolutionary movements and the Soviet state were the main common feature of all fascist and semi-fascist dictatorships without exception. However, in a number of cases, these dictatorships not only preserved the remnants of bourgeois democracy, but even placed them at their service. This was the case in Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, where parliaments continued to exist, although their role was reduced to submissive service to dictatorships, and the electoral rights of working people were curtailed to the utmost. On the contrary, in Spain, during the years of the fascist regime of General Primo de Rivera, the Cortes were dissolved, and in Yugoslavia, after the coup d'état of 1929, the National Assembly was even abolished.

The complexity and diversity of the social structure of the countries of South-Eastern and Central Europe, the associated general political instability [74] gave rise to many fascist groups competing with each other and fighting for power, oriented towards one or another imperialist power. That is why fascism in these countries could not go for the complete elimination of the bourgeois-parliamentary form of government and allowed the existence of "opposition" parties. On this occasion, G. Dimitrov at the 7th Congress of the Comintern said: "In some countries, mainly where fascism does not have a broad

mass base and where the struggle of individual groups in the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is strong enough, fascism does not immediately decide to liquidate the parliament and retains it for others bourgeois parties, as well as a certain legality for the Social Democracy" {252} .

Italian and German fascism succeeded in creating a significant mass base for itself by the methods of social demagoguery. Social demagoguery was inherent in all fascist parties and organizations in other countries as well. However, they were unable to create the same mass base, although some of the population was deceived by fascist promises.

The characteristic features of the dictatorships of Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany include "fuhrership", that is, the personification in the person of the dictator of the supreme, peremptory, and not bound by any laws of state power. It was noteworthy that the Italian Duce was in charge, despite the formal preservation of royal power in Italy.

In other countries, fascist dictators never became "fuhrers." Some similarity was only Pilsudski in Poland and individual leaders in Latin America. In Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Japan, the dictatorship acquired a monarcho-fascist form - it relied on the supreme power of the king (Greece, Yugoslavia), the king (Bulgaria) or the emperor (Japan).

There were also certain differences in the field of ideology. This is, of course, not about its social essence, reactionary-bourgeois, but only about the degree to which this ideology was permeated with extreme racism and chauvinism. In this respect, their Japanese relative was on a par with Italian and German fascism. Nationalism took deep roots in bourgeois-landlord Poland and, to varying degrees, in other countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. One of its manifestations was the persecution of national minorities, in Poland - Belarusians and Ukrainians. But still, in none of these countries did he reach such heights of fanaticism as in fascist Germany and Italy.

Aggressiveness was inherent in all varieties of fascism. Japanese monarcho-fascism in this respect was not inferior to Italian and German {253} . The three main instigators of a new world war sought to dominate the entire globe or a significant part of it. In other countries that did not have a great military and economic potential, there was also an insatiable thirst for territorial acquisitions, so inherent in the big bourgeoisie and landowners, but it did not spill over into a global scale, but manifested itself in predatory claims in relation to neighboring states. The ruling circles of Poland and Romania wanted to realize their territorial claims at the expense of the USSR.

When it came to aggression against the USSR, all the reactionary regimes, by virtue of their class nature, showed a striking unity, despite the contradictions between them. Hatred of the USSR united [75] the fascist regimes with German imperialism and its Hitlerite offspring. This was also largely due to the fact that the ruling circles of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe were aware of the might of the Soviet Union and would like to fight against it together with the more powerful capitalist powers. Their fascist dictators consoled themselves with the hope that their country would be able to become an equal partner of Hitlerite Germany in the aggression against the Soviet Union and realize their predatory claims.

The historical merit of the communist parties of countries with dictatorial regimes lies in the fact that, under the most difficult conditions of the most severe terror of the ruling circles, they tirelessly fought against fascism and war, for the true national interests of their peoples and countries. They presciently warned of the inevitable disastrous consequences of a reactionary-aggressive course {254} .

5. Fascism is war

One of the main tasks of the fascist dictatorships was to carry out certain state measures to regulate production, to further develop the system of state-monopoly capitalism in order to prepare for war as

soon as possible and to carry out the aggressive plans of the ruling classes.

In those countries where, by the time fascism came to power, there was not yet developed monopoly capitalism, the establishment of a fascist dictatorship contributed to accelerated monopolization and the imposition of a system of state-monopoly regulation of the economy.

The foreign policy goals of fascism depended on the degree of power of a particular country. But everywhere the fascist dictatorships were used by the imperialist bourgeoisie for aggressive purposes, carrying with them a mortal threat to the Soviet Union, to the international communist movement, to the democratic rights and freedoms of working people, to the national and even biological existence of many peoples.

Fascism is war, the communists immediately said. "Since fascism," notes Palm Dutt, "is ... the expression of the most violent policy of capitalism in crisis, it inevitably means war" {255} . The fascist cliques furiously accelerated the preparation and unleashing of the war, the objective causes of which were deeply rooted in the very system of state-monopoly capitalism. The West German historian Hofer agrees to admit that "the National Socialist dictatorship in Germany is the prerequisite without which the Second World War as a historical phenomenon would be unthinkable; the National Socialist dictatorship appears as its main cause" {256} . But fascism was a product of the imperialist system. Hofer does not expose [76]her guilt in causing world wars. In reality, it was the greedy financial capital of Germany, as A. Norden writes, "showed the path that Hitler had to take up arms" {257} .

The most influential person in the concerns of the Weimar Republic, K. Duisberg, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of IG Farbenindustry and President of the Imperial Union of German Industry, was one of those who nurtured the Fascist Party. And it is not surprising that Duisberg welcomed the rise of the Nazis to power. "Under the regime set up by Adolf Hitler, Germany will become powerful again," {258} , he declared.

It would be a mistake to think that bourgeois democracy can become a complete guarantee against war. Historical experience shows that even the most "democratic" bourgeois states resort to wars of conquest and aggression against other countries and peoples, and that each such war is combined with an intensification of reaction and terror within the country that leads it.

But the fascist political regime forced the adoption of the program that most corresponded to the will of finance capital. There was intense ideological coercion. Fascist terror spread to the realm of ideology as well. Fascist propaganda organs (in Germany, a ministry of popular clarification and propaganda was created), headed by Goebbels, acted in close contact with the political police (Gestapo in Germany) and made extensive use of its services. They did not convince people who held different views, they destroyed them.

They intensively propagated the most reactionary ideology - a complex of political, philosophical, religious, moral (actually immoral) and artistic (actually anti-artistic) views. The ideology of fascism, like itself, is a characteristic product of the general crisis of capitalism.

The ideologists of fascism were aware of their inability to oppose Marxism with any scientific theory. Therefore, their programs included the denial of social sciences, scientific knowledge, scientific worldview, calls for barbarism. Fascist ideologists openly said: "We are rather for a worldview that is criticized as barbarism, because we consider the best battle cry proclaimed in recent years: back to barbarism" {259} . Soon, the bonfires of burned books flared up in the streets and squares of the fascist countries, and subsequently the sky over Europe was eclipsed by the black smoke of crematoria.

From the denial of science, a definition of the worldview, characteristic of the Nazis, was also given, which they considered not as scientific knowledge of the laws of social development, but as a blind, reckless faith in the "truths" proclaimed by the Fuhrer. Hitler defined the official purpose of such an understanding of the worldview in the following words: "A person can die (in war. - Ed.) only for the idea that he does not understand." In other words, if

people understood the class meaning of Nazi ideas, they would not fight for them.

The complex of fascist ideas was almost the same in all countries where such dictatorships were established. In the first place was the racial theory, according to which this nation is the only one, "chosen by God", and therefore world domination [72] and all the riches of the earth should belong to it. After all, the "chosen nation" cannot live in conditions of a limited and therefore insufficient "living space"! In reality, the fascists only cared about the monopoly top. In order to hide the true meaning of their slogans, the fascist leaders strenuously convinced the population of the country of the complete coincidence and unity of their ideas with national interests.

Another important component of the fascist ideology and policy was the glorification of brute force, which is allegedly the main factor in social progress and the entire development of mankind. This was inextricably linked with the cult of the leader, the "superman", who differed from ordinary mortals by the strength of his intellect, the will to universal power, the ability to subjugate the masses and the means of extreme cruelty to achieve his goals. Fascist leaders and Fuhrers were proclaimed examples of such "supermen".

The ideology of fascism demanded the recognition of the Fuhrer's absolute rightness and unlimited confidence in him. By all means - from the press and radio, theatrical performances and mass spectacles to concentration camps and torture - the Nazis convinced the population that such trust does not require any reflection or proof, that it is based solely on faith, which is of a religious nature. Both Mussolini and Hitler called fascism a religious concept, the highest form of religious worship.

The fascist cult of the leader is also used by some modern bourgeois authors in order to prove that fascism was the product of only individual personalities.

Representatives of various trends in bourgeois historiography are united by the desire to hide the class character of fascism as a dictatorship of monopoly capital. Bourgeois historians, philosophers and sociologists are trying to portray fascism as a kind of

conglomeration of "revolutionary and conservative" forces, not amenable to a clear socio-political characterization.

Modern pro-fascist literature is characterized by the book of the English author Hamilton, who pretends to be a historian. In the preface, he writes: "Essentially, fascism was a 'myth', a contradictory 'system of idols', defying logical definition or rational analysis." {260}. He is trying to convince the youth, who did not survive the war and the bombing of British cities by German aircraft, that there was no fascism at all, there is only a myth about fascism. However, behind his vague formulations lies a certain concept, which was revealed by the publisher, who placed the following annotation on the dust jacket of Hamilton's book: "Modern historians prefer to reconsider the truth about fascism, not to say that he appealed to reasonable people of good will in his early years. It would be too easy ... to consider the early development of fascism as a malignant formation, as an inevitable forerunner of the Nazi concentration camps.

This is how the fascist executioners are portrayed as spokesmen for the good will of reasonable people! The malignant nature of fascism, which not only gave rise to monstrous atrocities, but also manifested itself in these crimes against humanity, is being questioned.

The concepts of the American historian D. Weiss, the Englishman S. Wolfe, and the West German historian E. Nolte have gained wide acceptance in the West. They all want to consign fascism to oblivion, to erase from the history of the recent past an important component of it—the struggle [78] of the peoples against fascism. Wulff suggests that the word 'fascism' be dropped from the political vocabulary, if only temporarily . Weiss calls fascism "the last gasp of conservatism" {262} . For Nolte, fascism is a conservative phenomenon that has its own nature {263}. Both Weiss and Nolte are trying to find the origins of fascism in the feudal reaction to the Great French bourgeois revolution. This concept, therefore, ignores the symbiosis of feudal and monopoly reaction inherent in imperialism, the unity of militarism and state-monopoly capitalism.

A large group of bourgeois researchers, denying the genetic relationship between fascism and extreme conservatism, focuses on the "revolutionary" components of fascism. Such views are most actively defended by the American historian E. Weber. He is unhappy that there are still scientists who continue to confuse reactionaries and fascists {264} . The Fascists, Weber argued, "were or wanted to be revolutionaries" {265} .

The concepts of reactionary historiography, often mutually exclusive at first glance, are imbued with a desire to rehabilitate fascism, to hinder the struggle of progressive forces against neo-fascism. Reactionary historiography hides the true class face and official purpose of fascism, which is a whole hierarchical system of organized mass violence created by financial capital. Fascism was called upon by the imperialist rulers to play the role of the organizer of a new world war.

The history of fascism as a specific social phenomenon, which has acquired various specific forms in individual countries, convincingly reveals its essence. Fascism was a direct offspring of world imperialism, it was nurtured and nurtured by it. It appeared where it was most needed by monopoly capital. The terrorist fascist dictatorship had a very definite class purpose. It was created to deal with the revolutionary, democratic, national liberation, communist movement, to prepare and unleash aggressive wars. Since the nature of imperialism has not changed, fascism still exists today in some countries and represents a significant potential threat in the capitalist world.

The service role of fascism was not limited to numerous local acts of aggression conceived and carried out by it at the behest of the monopolies. It was imperialism and its brainchild, fascism, which formed the hotbeds of the Second World War.

*** (...)

Formation of the main focus of the World War

1. Fascist coup in Germany

The world economic crisis that began in 1929 laid bare all the contradictions of imperialism and led to an unprecedented aggravation of the political situation both within the capitalist countries and in the international situation. The aggressiveness of imperialism and its striving to find a way out of the existing situation on the paths of preparing and unleashing a new world war have intensified.

Germany occupied a special place in the system of imperialism. Its industry was rapidly recovering during the ten post-war years. By 1929, its level had risen by one and a half times compared to the pre-war level. Germany produced nearly 12 percent of the world's industrial output {371} . The role of monopolies has increased in the economic and political life of the country. The concerns of Krupp, Flick, Siemens, Steel Trust, IG Farbenindustri, and AEG have reached gigantic proportions. The process of concentration of industry was accompanied by the centralization of banking capital in the hands of Deutsche Bank, Dresdener Bank, Donat Bank, and a few others.

The high concentration of capital and the enormous industrial capacity of Germany's industry meant that it was deeply affected by the economic crisis.

The crisis has engulfed all sectors of the country's economy. During 1929-1933. its industrial output index fell by more than 40 percent. The industrial crisis was accompanied by a financial and credit one: in its first two years alone, more than 200 small and medium-sized banks {372} went bankrupt . The economic crisis developed into a crisis of the entire political system of imperialism. Germany became the center of contradictions in the imperialist camp.

The crisis dealt a heavy blow primarily to the German working class. The reduction in production led to the fact that almost half of the industrial proletariat of the country (8 million people) was left without work {373} . As the American publicist G. Knickerbocker

noted in 1932, Germany "has broken the world record for wage cuts" {374} . [112]

The intertwining of the industrial crisis with the agrarian crisis also worsened the position of the peasantry. The middle strata, especially numerous in Germany, were also ruined - artisans, handicraftsmen, shopkeepers. The situation of the German people was further complicated by the fact that they were under the yoke of not only German, but also foreign capital, as they paid reparations and interest on debts and loans.

Under these conditions, the working class came out resolutely in defense of its political rights. A revolutionary crisis was growing in the country. In the autumn and winter of 1929/30, strikes of protest took place in Berlin, Saxony, and other places in Germany, which were brutally suppressed by the government {375} . On August 24, 1930, the Central Committee of the KKE addressed all the anti-fascist and democratic forces of the country with a program for the national and social salvation of the German people.

During the period of an acute political crisis in Germany, the leaders could no longer govern the country by the old methods - through the hands of the Social Democrats, to pursue a policy of overcoming the crisis at the expense of the working people. Unable to contain the growing influence of the communists, the bourgeoisie began to increasingly apply terrorist methods of domination and speed up the militarization of the country.

Fearing a revolutionary explosion in Germany, international reaction came to the aid of the German imperialists. In 1929, instead of the Dawes plan for reparations, a new one, the so-called Young Plan, was developed, which facilitated the flow of capital into Germany and provided for a reduction in reparations levied from it. In fact, they were soon abolished, as was the entire system of control over Germany established by the Treaty of Versailles. German imperialism regained full economic and financial sovereignty. The adoption of the Young Plan was accompanied by an anti-Soviet campaign. Under the flag of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, a united front of German and international imperialist reaction was

created, with the aim of liquidating the remnants of the Weimar Republic and establishing a regime of open terrorist dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The fascist party, with its anti-communist, chauvinist, and revanchist domestic and foreign policy, increasingly attracted the sympathy of German finance capital, which saw it as a tool for cracking down on the workers' movement and preparing the country for an aggressive war. In 1929-1930, German monopolists began to draw closer to the Nazis. The magnates of the Rhenish-Westphalian heavy industry E. Kirdorf, F. Thyssen and A. Vogler, and previously associated with the Nazis, set a course to strengthen this party. In February 1930, the Ruhr Coal Syndicate in Essen obliged each of its members to contribute seven pfennigs from every ton of coal sold to the coffers of the Fascist and German National People's Parties and other reactionary organizations in order to support "national interests" [376]. Numerous German princes and barons, large landowners, foreign monopolists, such as the English oil magnate G. Deterding, the American automobile king G. Ford, and others also provided similar support to the fascist party.

On September 23, 1930, the attache of the American embassy in Berlin, D. Gordon, reported to the US Secretary of State G. Stimson: "There is no doubt that Hitler received significant financial support from certain large industrialists ... The facts that have become known in recent days give the impression that important financial [113]circles - albeit not to the extent previously reported - exerted and are exerting pressure on the chancellor and other members of the cabinet to undertake an experiment with the participation of Nazis in the government (it can be assumed that the Social Democrats, as a price for their active cooperation with the government will insist on conditions that are unpleasant for financiers). Just today I heard a rumor from a source, usually well informed, that the various American financial circles represented here are very active in the same direction .

With the help of funds received from the monopolists, the Nazis created their branched party apparatus, printed, and distributed numerous newspapers and leaflets. These funds were also used by

them to expand the terrorist organizations of the Nazi Party - the SA and SS, which increasingly zealously participated in the massacres of the revolutionary workers' movement.

On March 30, 1930, due to the aggravation of class contradictions in the country, the cabinet of G. Müller was replaced by the government of the block of bourgeois parties headed by the leader of the right wing of the Catholic Party of the Center G. Brüning, which included proxies of the monopolies and Junkers. The Brüning government did not take into account the opinion of the Reichstag and, in fact, being a "presidential cabinet", ruled the country with the help of "emergency decrees" on reducing wages for workers and employees, introducing new taxes on workers, and reducing the taxation of capitalists, reducing unemployment benefits and social insurance. As a result, in 1929-1932. the average weekly wage of a German worker was halved, and the total amount of wages and salaries paid by employers fell from 44.5 billion to 25.7 billion marks.[378] , which barely provided for the half-starved existence of the unemployed himself, not to mention his family.

Taking advantage of the tragic situation of millions of working people, the National Socialists launched a propaganda campaign on an unprecedented scale under revanchist, racist, chauvinist slogans. They promised: to the workers - to eliminate unemployment, to the peasants - to prohibit the sale of land at auction, to shopkeepers - to close large department stores, to artisans - to reduce the prices of raw materials and set higher prices for their products, and to everyone - to abolish "percentage slavery". The Nazis stopped at nothing. In an effort to win women over to their side, they put forward the cynical slogan: "Every woman will get a man, only let Hitler come to power" [379] . Nazi agitation had a strong corrupting effect.

The fascists made extensive use of bourgeois-democratic freedoms for their own purposes. "We are going to the Reichstag," said Goebbels in 1928, "in order to equip the arsenal of democracy with its own weapons. We become deputies in order to paralyze the Weimar spirit with its own help. If democracy is stupid enough to give us free tickets and subsidies for this disservice, then that's their

business. Any legal way is good for us to turn the current situation around... We come as enemies! We come as a wolf breaks into a flock of sheep" {380} . [114]

Fascist terror intensified. The SA detachments actually turned into a real army of up to 300 thousand people. More than 60 percent of it was made up of people who had been deprived of work and earnings for a long time. Many of them were transferred to the barracks, which gave them food and shelter. Well-armed detachments, which included criminals, organized bloody battles in the streets, disrupted rallies and meetings of communists, and killed anti-fascists. The Nazis managed to lure into their networks a significant part of the students, the petty bourgeoisie, all kinds of declassed elements, employees, and backward layers of the working class, therefore, in the elections to the Reichstag on September 14, 1930, they collected 6.41 million votes, almost 8 times more than in 1928

The bigwigs of finance capital welcomed the success of the Nazis in the elections and gave them even more support. For their part, the Nazis began to seek the support of the monopolists more actively. As the head of the fascist press O. Dietrich wrote, "in the summer of 1931, the Fuhrer decided to enlist the support of the leading representatives of the German economy in order to destroy the existing government system ... In the following months, the Fuhrer traveled all over Germany in his Mercedes, everywhere arranging secret meetings with authority figures" {381}. One such meeting took place on 19 June 1931 in Munich between Hitler, the monopolist Stinnes and the Nazi Gauleiter Wagner. Soon Stinnes, in a letter to Hitler, expressed his admiration for the "project for the expansion of German living space in the east" and recommended that the Soviet Union and the countries of South-Eastern Europe {382} be chosen as the first target of aggression .

On October 11, 1931, a conference between Hitler and the leaders of other fascist organizations took place in Harzburg, in which the former director of the Reichsbank Schacht, the magnates of capital Thyssen, Flick, Krupp, Pensgen, Hugenberg, General Seeckt and German princes took part. Schacht, in his memoirs, tries to belittle

the significance of this gathering, which received the name "Harzburg Front". He claims that "this front never existed" {383} . In fact, it was then that German reaction created a bloc of Hitlerites with generals and junkers and developed a plan for the transfer of power to the fascists {384} .

On December 9, 1931, Thyssen and Vogler met with Hitler at the Kaiserhof Hotel in Berlin {385} ; in mid-December 1931, the East Prussian nobility demanded that President Hindenburg transfer power to Hitler {386} .

So that the monopolists would not be afraid of some of the demagogic anti-capitalist provisions written in the program of the Nazi Party adopted in 1924, the Nazis revised it and introduced a number of changes {387} . The demand for the nationalization of concerns, syndicates and trusts was replaced by an obligation not to encroach on private property, including large industrial enterprises. In January 1932, Hitler announced this to a meeting of the largest monopolists, held in Düsseldorf. Those present enthusiastically accepted Hitler's statement about his intention to "extirpate Marxism in Germany" and conquer "living space", since his speech fully expressed the aggressive aspirations of the kings of German heavy industry, the financiers [115]and junkers. To ensure world domination, Hitler planned to create a multimillion-strong army, which would require a huge number of guns, tanks, and warships to equip. Such a plan made a deep impression on the assembled industrialists, and as a result, large sums from the safes of heavy industry tycoons flowed into the cashiers of the National Socialist Party.

The question of giving Hitler the powers of the Reich Chancellor was resolved. But behind the scenes there was a desperate bargaining: under what conditions should the Nazis be admitted to power? The Reichswehr command also joined in the bargaining, which sought, using the National Socialists as a support, to keep the government in its hands. The Nazis demanded full power. Later, at the 7th Congress of the Communist International, G. Dimitrov said that "fascism usually comes to power in a mutual, sometimes sharp

struggle with the old bourgeois parties or with a certain part of them, in a struggle even in the fascist camp itself ..." {388} .

In May 1932, under pressure from financial and junker circles, especially the "masters' club", which united 300 of the richest families in Germany, the Brüning government resigned. Baron von Papen was appointed Reich Chancellor, and prominent representatives of industrialists and bankers entered his cabinet as ministers: General Schleicher, Baron Neurath, and others. The creation of such a government opened the way for the Nazis to power. The danger of fascism was growing rapidly. The Nazis intensified their bloody terror against the working class and democratic organizations.

The Communist Party of Germany called on the working people and all the progressive forces of the nation to rally in the "Anti-Fascist Action" movement. Fascism could be stopped. By the summer-autumn of 1932, the struggle of the German people against the Nazis had become so strong that the influence of the Nazis began to wane.

At that time, with the unity of the working class that the communists called for, it was still possible to break the back of the fascist beast. But the leaders of the Social Democracy rejected all their proposals and pursued a policy of "lesser evil", which provided for the support of bourgeois governments, which exercised power through emergency decrees, ostensibly to prevent the establishment of a fascist dictatorship. In the presidential elections of March-April 1932, they called for Hindenburg, the henchman of the monopolies, agrarians, and militarists, to vote. But if the Communists said: "Whoever votes for Hindenburg votes for Hitler, whoever votes for Hitler votes for war" {389}, then the Social Democrats declared: "Whoever chooses Hindenburg beats Hitler." As a result of the vote for Hindenburg, 18.6 million votes were cast, and he became president. Hitler collected 11.3 million votes {390} .

In July 1932, the Prussian constitutional government was dispersed, which was a further step towards the fascisization of the country. However, the Social Democrats reacted passively to this as well. When the communists offered to organize a general strike, they

refused. The Social Democracy surrendered the Weimar Republic to the Nazis without a fight. She not only "overlooked" fascism; she actually cleared the way for it. After the silent resignation of the Social Democrats from ministerial posts in Prussia, the Nazis realized that there would be no resistance on their part.

The only completely consistent fighter against the fascist danger was the Communist Party of Germany. Under conditions of severe [116] persecution in the country from September to December 1932, there were 1,100 strikes, many rallies with the participation of the Communists {391} . The membership of the Communist Party grew from 125,000 in 1928 to 360,000 by the end of 1932 {392} .

In the elections to the Reichstag in November 1932, about 6 million votes were cast for the Communist Party (every sixth voter); she acquired 100 mandates.

The growing influence of the communists seriously worried the bosses of the German and international monopolies. On November 11, 1932, Thyssen advised the manager of the affairs of the union for the protection of joint economic interests in the Rhineland and Westphalia, M. Schlenker, to give Hitler all possible support. The leaders of monopoly capital saw that the bourgeois parties in power were incapable of averting the impending revolutionary crisis, and they took measures to eliminate differences over the composition of the future German government. Some monopolies demanded the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor, others insisted on the creation of a coalition government, the leading role in which would belong to the leaders of the old reactionary party of monopoly capital and the Junkers - the German National People's Party - headed by Hugenberg.

In mid-November 1932, 17 large industrial and banking magnates sent a petition to President Hindenburg demanding the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor, and Schacht informed the latter {393} . At the same time, Hitler's adviser on economic issues, Kepler, who was closely connected with the German monopolies, informed the banker K. Schroeder that a complete agreement had been reached on the creation of a government headed by Hitler. At the same time, the

former crown prince addresses Hindenburg twice with letters and insistently advises him: "Before it is too late, take, Your Excellency, the greatest historical decision: empower Hitler now to form a government ..." {394}. In his second letter of December 2, 1932, the crown prince quite frankly defines the cherished goal of this whole action: "A distinct national front against the left will be created" {395}

On December 3, 1932, a government was formed headed by General Schleicher, a confidant of the leadership of the Reichswehr. E. Telman foresaw that the new government would play the role of a kind of springboard for the establishment of a fascist dictatorship. Indeed, in the days of Schleicher's chancellorship, German imperialist reaction completed the behind-the-scenes preparations for the transfer of power to the Nazis.

On January 4, 1933, secret negotiations between Hitler and Papen took place at Schroeder's villa, near Cologne, and on January 7, a new meeting, about which Kirdorf wrote: "For the last time before the seizure of power, the leaders of the economy met in my house with A. Hitler, R Hess, G. Goering and other leading persons " {396} . The owners of metallurgical concerns and bankers made the final decision to transfer power to the Nazis. [117]

The conspiracy to rule the monopolies with the Nazis was accompanied by the intensified terror of the fascist gangs, the murders of anti-fascists, the destruction of demonstrations and rallies of workers, as well as the premises of democratic organizations. The Communist Party of Germany continued its selfless struggle against the growing danger of the fascists coming to power. At the beginning of January 1933, the KPD called for a mass demonstration of protest against the Schleicher government, the intolerable plight of the working people and the fascist terror. Hundreds of thousands of anti-fascists in the most important industrial centers of Germany responded to the call of the Communist Party.

But German imperialism stubbornly pursued the course it had adopted. On January 28, 1933, President Hindenburg resigned Schleicher and instructed Hitler to form a new government. So on

January 30, the fascist party seized state power. A terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinistic, aggressive circles of finance capital has been established in Germany.

M. Gorky wrote in 1934 about Hitler's coming to power: "If the nation that gave the world Hans Sachs, Goethe, Beethoven, the Bach family, Hegel, Humboldt, Helmholtz and many dozens of the largest "masters of culture", if this nation chooses Hitler as its leader, this, of course, is a fact that testifies to the exhaustion of the creative energy of its commanding class ... " {397}

January 30, 1933 is one of the darkest days in German history. This is a turning point in the process of the birth of the second world war; from that day began the rapid transformation of Germany into a state of war, which brought innumerable misfortunes to the German people and all mankind. Even such a reactionary as General Ludendorff was able to understand the fatal significance of this event. In a letter sent to Hindenburg on February 1, 1933, he wrote: "By appointing Hitler Chancellor, you betrayed our German homeland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time. I solemnly predict to you that this man will push our state into the abyss, plunge our nation into an indescribable misfortune. Generations to come will curse you for what you have done." {398}. In another letter to the president, Ludendorff gave the following assessment of the terror that reigned in the "third empire" with the coming to power of the Nazis: "More and more terrible relations are being established in the Reich led by you. The law is being trampled more and more in spite of the chatter about the rule of law and the introduction of a new law. The physical freedom of the Germans has also been trampled in an unheard of way. And where "cultural chambers", or rather, "lead chambers" were created for the German spiritual life, the last remnants of spiritual freedom are buried, which was not even in the Jesuit state of Paraguay, nor in the period of the dark Middle Ages .

The transfer of power to Hitler was not a victory for the "legal opposition", as the West German bourgeois falsifiers of history and memoirists now assert {400} . It was a fascist coup, prepared in advance by a behind-the-scenes conspiracy of the bosses of the

German monopolies, financiers, reactionary generals, and agrarians, with the secret complicity of the leaders of the right-wing Social Democrats.

German Nazism had many similarities with fascism in other countries. But it was he who became its most brutal and misanthropic form, which is characterized by: a special zeal for the fulfillment of the social order of the monopolies; the close union of Nazi Fuhrers with monopoly capital; furious anti-communism, outright chauvinism, policy [118] of bloody terror; all-round feverish preparations for a world war in the name of achieving the main goal - world domination, the elimination of capitalist competitors and the liquidation of the class enemy - the Soviet Union.

The Hitlerite state, the so-called "third empire" {401} , is the most gloomy offspring of monopoly capital. The fascist dictatorship was called upon to ensure the restoration of the military-industrial potential of the country in the shortest possible time and most effectively and prepare it for war not only materially, but also morally: to awaken base instincts, to fool millions of soldiers, turning them into automatic machines capable only of robbing and killing.

If the Italian imperialists at first wanted to turn the Mediterranean into an "Italian lake" and create an empire in Africa - they could not count on more with their limited opportunities at that time - then in Germany the situation was different. The high concentration and centralization of production and capital, the exceptional aggressiveness of its bourgeoisie, which grew up on the soil of the predatory traditions of Prussian militarism and immeasurable national arrogance {402} , the long-standing dream of securing a "place in the sun", finally, the thirst for revenge brought to the level of hysteria - all this gave rise to plans for an unprecedented aggression in history.

For modern reactionary historiography, which seeks to relieve the imperialists of responsibility for preparing and unleashing the Second World War, the assertion that the German monopolies had nothing in common with the Hitlerite government has become a

stereotyped device. One of the representatives of this historiography, K. Stechert, wrote: "The widely held opinion that large German industry supported the Nazi party is objectively wrong" {403}. A similar thesis was formulated somewhat differently by the West German historian G. Jacobsen, who believes that the fascist dictatorship, like the war, was an improvisation of Hitler alone. "I deliberately confine myself ... to the personality of Hitler," he said, "because in him and in the decisions he made mostly independently and autocratically one should look for one of the most important keys to understanding the beginning, course and results of this global war" {404}. The same opinion is shared by the West German historian G. Michaelis, who claims that the Second World War is "one of the most grandiose improvisations in history" {405}. Consequently, he is trying to deny that the German monopolists and their henchman, the Hitlerite Party, prepared the war in advance and comprehensively.

Historical facts, not to mention elementary logic, completely refute the concept of the advocates of German imperialism, who, in fact, continue the line of official propaganda carried out in Germany during the years of the fascist dictatorship. Germany was portrayed as a "state of the whole people", headed by the Fuhrer, who supposedly personified the interests of the German nation. In reality, the Fuhrer expressed the interests of monopoly capital - the true ruler of the "third [119] empire." It was the monopolies that determined the domestic and foreign policy of Germany, and the Nazis in the final analysis only carried out their social order.

The head of the decartelization department of the American military administration in West Germany, D. Martin, described the role of monopolies in fascist Germany as follows: "Pre-war films depicted the Nazis marching at the Prussian step as absolute masters of Germany. It is worth, they say, Hitler to command, and the most powerful rulers of Germany of the pre-Nazi period rush to carry out his orders, fearing possible reprisals. But after we got acquainted with the archives at Villa Hügel and questioned Alfred Krupp and the directors of his factories, not a trace of this impression remained. Hitler and his party were never allowed to forget that they owed

their rise to power to the industrialists and that they could only succeed with the help of the industrialists .. However, even this assessment cannot be considered complete. The relationship of monopolists with the Nazis was not limited to the provision of assistance. There was something much more going on here. It consisted in the fact that the Hitlerite party carried out the will of monopoly capital and was its faithful instrument, an instrument of terror, war, and extreme inhumanity. Of course, this does not mean that the leaders of German fascism were weak-willed clerks of the capitalists. The regime they established served the interests of the monopolies and had a definite class purpose, which might not coincide with the private aspirations of individual monopolists. Hitler's leaders tried to reconcile the interests of various monopoly groups, often at odds with each other, and showed initiative in the search for such solutions,

The fascist dictatorship, having achieved an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of the state apparatus, at the same time increased its dependence on the monopolies, as a result of which their oppression over the masses of millions of working people increased to the extreme.

The most active role in determining the policy of the Hitlerite government was played by such "whales" of industrial and financial capital as Schacht, Krupp, Thyssen, Schroeder, Rechling, Flick, Rechberg and others. All of them maintained the closest relations with the fascist leaders and, in their numerous memorandums, expressed to them proposals for carrying out certain measures in preparation for the war. A close relationship with Hitler was established, for example, by the "Imperial Union of German Industry", headed by Krupn. On March 24, 1933, the union sent a loyal letter to Hitler, in which he assured of his readiness to do "everything in his power to help the government carry out the difficult tasks that confronted him" {407}. The government, in turn, helped the industrialists' union with all the means at its disposal.

The monopolists exerted a decisive influence not only on the determination of the domestic and foreign policy of the Hitlerite government, they supported it morally and materially. Large sums

of money were regularly transferred to the cash desks of the Nazi party even after the establishment of the fascist dictatorship. In June 1933, the "Reich Association of German Industry" (as the union was renamed) established "the fund [120] of Adolf Hitler from the donations of the German economy." All members of the association were obliged to systematically transfer funds to the current account of this fund, the chairman of the board of trustees of which was Krupp, who personally contributed 12 million marks {408} in the prewar years . In total, during the fascist dictatorship, the Nazi Party received about 700 million marks through the Hitler fund {409}.

Hitler's deputy for the Nazi Party, R. Hess, in a secret circular explained the significance of the fund for internal activities of the fascist elite: the fund will provide, on the one hand, "the imperial leadership with the funds necessary for the SA, SS," Hitler Youth "and other organizations", and on the other - will give "entrepreneurs participating in the fund the confidence that their work to restore the German economy will not be hindered." "Restoration" was understood as the revival of Germany's military power and its preparation for an aggressive war.

Many monopolies subsidized the activities of the Nazis directly. For example, the IG Farbenindustry concern from 1933 to 1939 transferred more than 580 thousand marks to the political leadership of the Nazi Party, 512 thousand marks to the SS, 258 thousand marks to the SA, 639 thousand marks to the pilot corps, etc. Each perfect The territorial seizure by the German fascists was accompanied by abundant donations from the monopolists. On the eve of Munich, the IG Farbenindustry concern "donated" 600,000 marks to the "help" fund for the Sudetenland {410} .

The close cooperation of the Nazis with the monopolists was also manifested in the fact that important government posts, especially in the field of economics, were given to the leaders of the largest concerns. In August 1934, Schacht, the head of the Reichsbank, who was closely connected not only with German, but also with American and British financial capital, took the post of Minister of Economics {411} , turning in fact into the financial and economic dictator of Germany. Thyssen and Reinhardt became state councilors

in Prussia, and they controlled those areas in which the industrial enterprises belonging to them were located.

The Hitlerite government created a whole system of subordinating the entire economy of the country to the monopolists. On July 15, 1933, the General Council of the Economy was established, which was run by the cannon king Krupp, the industrial magnate Rura Thyssen, the general director of the Steel Trust factories Vöglér, the electric king Siemens, the largest banker and financial intermediary between Hitler and the American banks Schroeder, chairman of the supervisory Council of the Commercial Bank Reinhardt, General Director of the German Potash Syndicate Dean, President of the Central Association of Banks and Banking Enterprises Fischer. This body could rightly be called "the real government of Germany" {412}

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On February 27, 1934, the law "On the preparation of a new organic structure of the German economy" was issued, in accordance with which 6 imperial economic groups were created (industry, energy, banks, insurance, crafts and trade). They were subject to 31 branch and about 300 special groups and subgroups {413} , which became the only representatives in their branches. Every entrepreneur was required to join [121]to one of them. In this way, representatives of the leading concerns took control of the entire economic, financial, and political apparatus of fascist Germany, subordinating the socio-economic life of the country to their dictatorship. The imperial economic chamber and economic chambers in the provinces (18 chambers) created on the basis of the law had great powers in the distribution of orders and raw materials. Germany was, moreover, divided into military-economic districts.

The practice of the Führer, introduced by the law "On the regulation of national labor" of January 20, 1934, was increasingly used in the economy. Entrepreneurs were given virtually unlimited power. The law established that the entrepreneur is the "Führer" of the enterprise and the workers are obliged to remain faithful to him, based allegedly on the commonality of their production interests. The complete autocracy of the capitalist over the workers was legalized, who, in fact, became forced slaves.

On June 26, 1935, the imperial law "On Labor Service" was adopted, which was of great practical importance for preparing Germany for a new world war. It was a definite addition to the universal military service and obligated every young German to work for a year on the construction of military facilities before being called up for active military service.

The alliance of the Nazis with the monopolists was reinforced by the fact that the fascist leaders themselves became owners or co-owners of big capital. According to Thyssen, at the time of the seizure of state power, the fascist rulers had nothing but debts, but very soon, after 1933, they became millionaires. They did not spare any means for their whims, especially if the costs were covered by the state treasury. The personification of wastefulness and embezzlement of the "Third Reich" was Goering. This high-ranking fascist was both Prime Minister of Prussia and Minister of Aviation, Chairman of the Reichstag and General Inspector of Forests and Hunting. The total amount of Goering's annual remuneration was about 2 million marks. Besides, he received huge incomes from the state concern Hermann Goering's Imperial Works and from other sources. As the head of the government of Prussia, he disposed of it as his own fiefdom, distributing state lands to his close associates. Thyssen wrote about Goering: "What belongs to Prussia belongs to him"{414}

Hitler - Fuhrer and Reich Chancellor, Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht - made millions from the sale of the book "Mein Kampf", which was distributed by force. He became a co-owner of the fascist publishing house Eyer, which subjugated all others. Only from the publication of daily newspapers the publishing house received about 700 million marks a year in net profit, a significant part of which went to Hitler. He enriched himself and encouraged his close associates to this, saying: "Let them do what they want, as long as they do not allow themselves to be covered on this."

The chief executioner of Nazi Germany, Himmler, profited from the robbery of repressed anti-fascists and the confiscation of property of Jews. He patiently waited in the wings and made the appropriation of public and private values in the occupied countries, the property

of innocent victims of fascism destroyed in death camps the main source of personal enrichment.

The head of the "German Labor Front" Ley enriched himself by robbing trade union funds and contributions from workers and employees to the fund of the "labor [122] front." He expressed his life "philosophy" with the words of a tabloid song: "Pick the roses before they fade!"

Goebbels appropriated millions of marks from the press, radio, and film funds he controlled. The "black fund" of his ministry, notes Thyssen, amounted to about 200 million marks a year {415} .

Ribbentrop previously had a large fortune, and when he became Minister of Foreign Affairs, he began to enrich himself with even greater zeal. He was the first among the Nazi leaders to prefer "just in case" to place his capital abroad. The American journalist Knickerbocker calculated that only six or seven Fascist leaders had deposited about 1.5 billion francs {416} in foreign banks by the beginning of the war .

The German military played an important role in the rise of the Nazis to power. Many bourgeois historians usually hush up or even try to deny this sinister role of the militarists.

The close alliance of the Nazis with the generals was formed immediately with the advent of the Nazi Party. The fascist coup of 1933 was carried out with the active assistance of the President of Germany, a military leader of the First World War, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Field Marshal Hindenburg.

Bourgeois historians, as a rule, emphasize some of the strife between the Reichswehr command and the Nazis in the 1920s. They write at length about the "vacillations" of the leaders of the Reichswehr, Generals Schleicher, Hammerstein-Equord, Adam, Bredow and Busgpe, during the anxious days of January 1933, when the crisis of the Schleicher government came.

Of course, there were differences between the top of the Nazi party and the leadership of the generals, and at times they escalated and led to mutual attacks in the press. But they did not go beyond the

"family quarrel" and touched on some issues of a tactical nature, especially which of them should play the first fiddle in the system of dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The leadership of the Reichswehr sought to subjugate the Nazi movement, "tame" its extremely ambitious, unscrupulous Fuhrers and use their mass base, especially the strike force - assault squads, in the interests of preparing for war. However, Hitler and his inner circle were not satisfied with secondary roles, they rushed uncontrollably to power, and as the National Socialist Party turned into one of the most influential political forces, their appetites increased.

Realizing that without the help of the Reichswehr they would not get power, the Nazis were looking for the most acceptable form of agreement with its leadership. The Nazi Party and the Reichswehr have long been united by the common goals of preparing for total war, anti-communism and revanchism.

With the aggravation of the economic and especially political situation in Germany, the question specifically arose of the methods and forms of attracting the Nazis to participate in the government.

Already in December 1930, General Seeckt, who was still influential in militaristic circles, stated in the press: "When asked whether the participation of the Hitler Party in the government is desirable, I answer with an unconditional "yes." It is not only desirable, but, moreover, necessary" [417] .

In subsequent years, the leaders of the Reichswehr repeatedly negotiated with Hitler regarding the involvement of the Nazis in the imperial government. In August 1932, the Minister of the Reichswehr Schleicher, during [123] regular negotiations with Hitler, agreed in principle with his demand for the post of Reich Chancellor (hoping to retain his post) and, after the meeting, strongly persuaded President Hindenburg to appoint the Fuhrer head of government. In January 1933, Schleicher, being no longer only Minister of the Reichswehr, but also Chancellor, again entered into negotiations (through intermediaries) with Hitler and, together with his supporters, the top leaders of the Reichswehr, Generals Hammerstein-Equord, Bussche and Bredov, spoke in favor of

Hitler's candidacy as the only way to solve the government crisis{418} . But it turned out that they were already bypassed by more active adherents of the Nazis. Hitler received the post of Reich Chancellor, General Blomberg became Minister of the Reichswehr, and Schleicher and his supporters were dismissed without any resistance. Having lost the race for the highest command positions in the Nazi state, they were forced to give way to more reactionary and sly generals, such as Blomberg, Reichenau, Keitel, who made a dizzying career under Hitler.

The Communist Party of Germany strongly opposed the coming of the Nazis to power. It launched a selfless struggle against the established terrorist regime.

On January 30, 1933, at the same time that the SA detachments were holding rallies and torchlight processions in honor of the Hitler government, the Central Committee of the KPD called on the SPD and the Christian trade unions to hold a joint general strike aimed at overthrowing the new government, and defined it as " government of an open fascist dictatorship ... a rude and undisguised declaration of war on the working people, on the German working class." The Communist Party warned: "Shameless wage cuts, the unbridled terror of the brown deadly plague, the trampling of the last meager remnants of the rights of the working class, the shameless course towards the preparation of imperialist war - this is what we will experience in the near future" {419}. According to the KKE, the persecution launched by the fascists against the communists was only a prologue to the destruction of all workers' organizations. "A bloody, barbaric regime of fascist terror hung over Germany" {420} . The Central Committee of the KKE called on all workers, regardless of their party affiliation, to create, together with the communists, a united front of struggle for the overthrow of the Hitlerite government and to win over the rest of the workers—the peasants, the middle class, and the intelligentsia.

The board of the Social Democratic Party rejected the appeal of the German Communist Party of January 30.

On February 7, 1933, at an illegal meeting of the Central Committee of the KKE, E. Thalmann described Hitler's government as an open fascist dictatorship. "In the person of Hitler, the Reich Chancellor was a man who made the war against the Soviet Union at the forefront of his foreign policy" {421} . Telman called on party members and its activists to use a variety of forms of resistance to the Nazi regime.

Thus, from the first days of the existence of the fascist dictatorship, the Central Committee of the KKE correctly assessed the class character, as well as the aggressive essence of its foreign and domestic policy. As an immediate goal, the leadership of the KKE put forward the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship by a united front of the working class and its allies. Members of the party organizations of the KKE, in leaflets and speeches to the workers of enterprises and residents [124] of cities, revealed the goals of the Nazi regime and called for fighting against it.

In late January-February, communists, social democrats, trade unionists and other opponents of Nazism organized joint demonstrations and rallies, demanding the overthrow of the Nazi government. Such performances took place in Berlin, Dusseldorf, Wuppertal, Dortmund, Cologne, Hamburg, in many cities of Thuringia, Mecklenburg and Pomerania. On the evening of January 31, 10,000 communists and other anti-fascists from Stuttgart, after a rally organized by the KPD, marched through the streets of the city. In Kassel, the communists, and the railway workers, who were under the influence of the Social Democrats, disrupted the torchlight procession of the SA detachments. On February 19, 20,000 Leipzig workers belonging to various parties and public organizations gathered to protest against the coming to power of the Nazi government. On February 23, Wilhelm Pieck spoke to thousands of Berlin workers at the last open rally of the KPD at the Sports Palace. In his speech, he called on the German working class to form a united front against fascism.{422} .

The facts refute the fabrications of the reactionary Anglo-American and West German historians that the German working class meekly submitted to the fascist dictatorship and "lost its fighting spirit

overnight." Under the most difficult conditions, many German workers waged a struggle against the fascist dictatorship. However, the joint actions of the working people did not take on a mass character. It was not possible to achieve practical unity of the working class. The leaders of the SPD and the General Association of German Trade Unions sabotaged the creation of a united front. On February 7, at a rally in the Berlin Lustgarten, attended by 200,000 workers, including many communists, the social democratic leaders who led the rally did not allow the representative of the KPD to read out the appeal of the Central Committee of the KKE to the leadership of the SPD, which spoke of the need for unity of action of all working class. In Dortmund, the head of the city police, the Social Democrat K. Zergibel, sent police units against the anti-fascist demonstration organized by the communists and ordered the arrest of its participants. Police chiefs - Social Democrats took repressive measures against the anti-fascist activities of even members of their own party.

Deciding not to negotiate with the KPD and to take a wait-and-see attitude, the SPD leaders pretended that they were only choosing the right moment to "rush into the fray". In fact, the right-wing leaders of the SPD abandoned the fight against fascism and continued to take positions of militant anti-communism. They in every possible way restrained the anti-fascist activities of members of their party and organizations under its influence, trying to prevent the unity of action of the working class, the main force in the struggle to overthrow the fascist dictatorship, opposed the holding of a general strike.

The leaders of the General Association of German Trade Unions took the same negative position. "Don't let them drag you into hasty actions and pernicious actions," {423} they urged the workers in a leaflet published on January 30th.

Some representatives of the intelligentsia and bourgeois parties warned of the danger that the fascist dictatorship [125] brought with it to the German people. The bourgeois publicist K. Ossietzky, speaking at the last legal meeting of the Berlin group of the Union of German Writers in February 1933, said: "I do not belong to any

party. I fought on the side of all currents, more often from the right, but sometimes also from the left. Today we must understand that everyone on the left is our allies. The banner under which I stand is ... the banner of the united anti-fascist movement" {424} .

The attitude of the so-called moderately bourgeois parties towards the Hitler government was determined by anti-communism. Their leaders saw in fascism only the enemy of the communists, whom they also considered their enemies. By adopting a conciliatory position towards the Nazis, they prepared the way for the defeat of their parties.

The situation developed in such a way that both the Social Democratic and the bourgeois parties did not oppose the fascist coup. A significant part of the population was misled and supported the Nazi regime. Some part of the German people took a wait-and-see attitude. In the early days and months of the Nazi dictatorship, the number of active fighters in the resistance movement was negligible.

The seizure of power in Germany by the Nazis is not an accidental phenomenon. The fascist dictatorship was not a power which, according to many bourgeois falsifiers of history, allegedly stood above classes. It was one of the forms of political domination of the monopoly bourgeoisie. "In the face of the Hitler Party," write historians of the German Democratic Republic, "power was taken by the party that, by its adventurism, its terror against the masses of the people, its rabid revanchism and anti-Sovietism, and its unbridled national demagoguery, most of all corresponded to the class interests of the most reactionary groups of German finance capital. . Fascist domination was an open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and imperialist elements of German finance capital.{425} .

2. Punitive and intelligence agencies are a tool for strengthening the fascist dictatorship

The restructuring of the state apparatus of fascist Germany was of paramount importance for the establishment and consolidation of the open terrorist dictatorship of monopoly capital. The main

elements of this restructuring were: ensuring the monopoly position of the National Socialist Party; the rejection of bourgeois-democratic methods of activity and the transition to openly violent, repressive methods; "cleansing" the state apparatus of democratic elements who are in opposition or who, in the opinion of the fascist leaders, are able to become in opposition to the course pursued by them; a sharp increase in the role of punitive and intelligence agencies; changes in the structure, competence and relationships of state bodies, which destroyed all bourgeois-democratic state-legal institutions established by the Weimar constitution^{426} (rights [126] of parliament, autonomy of the lands, local self-government, bourgeois legality, etc.).

Direct restructuring of state bodies was carried out from the end of March 1933 to the beginning of 1935. At this time, the main links of the state apparatus were created and all the foundations of its activity were determined. Among the most important legislative acts that formalized the state system of fascist Germany were: the law of March 24, 1933 "On the Elimination of Poverty of the People and the Reich" (the law on granting emergency powers to the government); the law of July 14, 1933 "Against the formation of new parties", which punished as a serious crime attempts to create other (except National Socialist) parties; the law of December 1, 1933 "On Ensuring the Unity of the Party and the State"; the law of January 30, 1934 "On the new structure of the state" (on the liquidation of the autonomy of the lands); law of August 2, 1934 "On the Supreme Head of State".

As a result of the restructuring of the state apparatus, it was rapidly merging with the monopolies and the National Socialist Party.

The supreme power was concentrated in the hands of the fascist government, primarily Hitler, who received the new title of Fuhrer of the fascist party and state, in practice equal to the titles of Caesar, Emperor.

The turn from bourgeois democracy to fascist dictatorship entailed major changes in the system of punitive and intelligence agencies and a general increase in their role in the mechanism of the state.

The system of punitive and intelligence agencies included organizations of the National Socialist Party: SA, SS and SD {427} .

The fascist government announced the full support of the assault troops, elevated them to the rank of auxiliary police and declared the unity of goals of the state and the SA. Thus, the newspaper "SS" of January 6, 1934, wrote: "New Germany could not exist without the fighters of the SA ... What has been done so far, namely the seizure of power in the state and the destruction of all ... followers of Marxism, liberalism, the annihilation of these people is only a preliminary task ... to the fulfillment of ... big: National Socialist tasks ... " {428}

The SA became the most important weapon in the fight against the anti-fascist movement, the fascist leadership forbade the police to interfere in the actions of the assault squads, giving them complete freedom. On March 3, 1933, Goering, speaking of the massacres of the storm troops with the communists, said: "I am not going to administer justice. My task is only destruction and annihilation... I will fight not for life, but for death... with the help of... brown shirts" {429} .

Assault detachments occupied a significant place in the system of punitive organs. "Internal political opponents," said Goebbels in 1935, "disappeared not for some secret reasons unknown to anyone. No, they disappeared because our movement had the most powerful weapons in the country, and these most powerful weapons were the SA detachments" {430} . [127] A special place among the punitive organs of fascist Germany was occupied by SS detachments (in 1933 there were 52 thousand people in them). They carried out "guarding the internal security of the empire" {431} .

The Nazi leadership, having eliminated any framework that limited the activities of punitive organs, used them to carry out open and unlimited terror. The order of the Minister of the Interior Frick stated: "The Reichsführer SS and the Chief of the German Police may take the administrative measures necessary to maintain order and security, even if they go beyond the legal limits of administrative measures" {432} .

After coming to power, the Nazis rebuilt the police system, affecting all aspects of its organization and activities. The main task of the police was to carry out mass terror and physically exterminate communists and anti-fascists.

In a special order on the use of weapons by the police, issued by Göring in February 1933, it was stated: "Police officials who, in the performance of their duties, use weapons, I will provide protection, regardless of the consequences of using weapons. On the contrary, anyone who shows false kindness should wait for punishment in the service. Any official must always remember that failure to take measures is a greater offense than a mistake made in taking them" {433} .

The fascist party-state elite completely subordinated the system of judicial bodies to their arbitrariness, turning them into a weapon of terror against communists and anti-fascists.

To consider cases of a "political" nature in the territory under the jurisdiction of the regional (zemstvo) court, "exceptional courts" were created. The simplified order of legal proceedings turned them into operational bodies for reprisals against anti-fascists.

How "exceptional courts" were created in Nazi Germany can be seen in the example of the so-called "People's Court", established on April 24, 1934. This court was created by the Chancellor (on the proposal of the Minister of Justice) of two members and three assessors to deal with cases of high treason, which had previously been considered by the imperial court. The order of proceedings in the "people's court" essentially did not differ from that adopted in the other "exceptional courts".

The Nazi Party Congress held in 1935 officially proclaimed the final rejection of the liberalist starting point of the old criminal legislation "no punishment without law" and established the principle of "punishment for every offense" {434} , meaning in practice the justification and justification of any barbaric methods fascist justice and the entire system of punitive organs aimed at the destruction of people who are not pleasing to the Nazi regime.

Endemic terror, total surveillance, comprehensive fascist propaganda turned Germany into a monstrous barracks, and most Germans into obedient creatures, over which the spirit of Hitlerism hovered. The police, the Gestapo, the Goebbels department did everything to ensure that this spirit became the soul of everything in the "Third Reich". The American writer Upton Sinclair, summing up the arguments of one of the leaders of fascist Germany - Goering, expressed anti-human, anti-social [128]Nazi aspirations: "We have specialists in all fields of knowledge, and for years they have worked out ways for us to break the will of those who stand in our way. We have studied the body of man, his brain and what you like to call the soul, we know how to deal with it. We will put him in a specially designed cell where he will not be able to stand, sit or lie down without experiencing discomfort. Bright light day and night will blind his eyes, and if he forgets for a second in a dream, then he will be pushed aside by the watchman assigned to him. A certain temperature will be maintained in the cell - not so low that he will die of cold, but quite suitable to turn him morally into an obedient lump of clay " {435} .

The role of the intelligence organs in suppressing the resistance of the exploited masses and in carrying out the aggressive foreign policy plans of German imperialism increased substantially. In order to achieve their goals, the fascists brought intelligence to the fore among other links in the state mechanism. The creation of a new intelligence system became the most important practical task of the Nazis. This was explained by the fact that total espionage most fully corresponded to the plans of the monopoly bourgeoisie and to the very essence of the fascist dictatorship, exceptional in its reactionary and aggressive nature.

Plans for the creation of an intelligence system were discussed in Munich at a meeting of the top of the Nazi Party as early as mid-1932 {436} . After the fascists came to power, these issues were put in a number of priorities.

The reorganization of the German intelligence apparatus was an integral part of the overall process of fascisization of the political superstructure, in particular the state apparatus. It was based on the

same principles that characterized the organization and activities of the entire state apparatus of Nazi Germany: totality, unbound by law, etc.

The creation of the fascist intelligence apparatus took place in 1933-1935. by reorganizing intelligence of the Weimar period and the formation of new services. During these years, the main links of the intelligence apparatus were formed, the most important fascist principles of its organization and activity were quite clearly manifested.

The fascist leadership assigned a special role to the political police in the state intelligence system. As a result of a number of measures, the political police was turned into a widely branched, centralized apparatus endowed with punitive functions.

In April 1933, by decree of Goering, a state secret police (Gestapo) was created in Prussia. It was declared the highest police authority, subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior, and was supposed to solve the tasks of the political police {437} . Subsequently, the Gestapo turned into an exceptional body in its position. According to Goering's decree of November 30, 1933, the Gestapo was subordinate only to the Prime Minister of Prussia. In March 1934, the district departments of the Gestapo separated from the local authorities and gained independence from all other state bodies. At the same time, the governing bodies of the general police were obliged to act in accordance with the directives of the Gestapo {438} . In the future, the Gestapo became one of the departments of the main department of imperial security in Germany. [129]

In the struggle against the vanguard of the working class and the anti-fascist forces, the Gestapo, on the basis of the decree of President Hindenburg of February 28, 1933, widely used the preventive arrest and imprisonment of communists and progressives in concentration camps.

The activities of the Gestapo were nothing more than legalized arbitrariness and reprisals. The Gestapo threw into concentration camps not only communists and anti-fascists, but also people who

were not pleasing to the Nazi regime, all dissidents for their subsequent physical destruction or turning into slaves.

One of the "old" intelligence agencies of Germany, the counterintelligence department of the War Ministry (Abwehr), headed by Admiral V. Canaris, was called to the service of the Nazis. Back in the pre-fascist period, this department began to deal not only with counterintelligence, but also with intelligence. By 1935, the Abwehr had become the main intelligence center of the fascist state, designed to conduct espionage, and commit acts of sabotage and terrorist acts in the USSR, as well as in capitalist countries.

The Abwehr created its agent network in the state apparatus, various public organizations in many countries, as well as in army headquarters (even in intelligence and counterintelligence agencies). Thus, an employee of the Austrian military intelligence, Colonel Lahousen, was in fact an agent of Canaris and, on his instructions, prepared the Anschluss of Austria.

The Abwehr worked closely with the intelligence services of the countries allied with Germany - Italy, Spain, Japan. Its head, long before the Second World War, under the pretext of fighting communism, was establishing ties with the British (Intelligence Service) and American (CIA) intelligence services.

The Abwehr had its own units in military districts and strategic centers, in allied and neutral countries, as well as in reconnaissance and sabotage schools that trained agents.

Preparing for an aggressive war, the fascist leadership significantly strengthened and expanded the activities of its intelligence and counterintelligence. At the same time, the Abwehr played a large role. It was he who began to collect information about the military-industrial potential of other states.

In 1935, Hitler instructed the Abwehr to obtain espionage information about the defense power of countries, primarily the Soviet Union, against which military attack plans were being developed. Hitler's intelligence was interested in the strategic and mobilization plans of the country, the location of government

agencies, defense enterprises, telegraphs, power plants, railway stations, sea and river ports, arsenals and warehouses, the number of rolling stock and the passage of goods, the defense system of border areas, etc.

In Germany, apart from the Abwehr, there were other, non-state intelligence agencies. In 1933-1935. their number increased significantly, and they gained great weight, becoming an integral part of fascist intelligence. The most important place among them was occupied by various organizations of the National Socialist Party.

The overall management of the intelligence apparatus of various departments was concentrated in the joint communications headquarters. It was headed by the fascist bosses Hess (chairman), Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, Bole, Bormann.

In April 1933, a foreign policy department of the National Socialist Party was created in Berlin, headed by Rosenberg. The department supervised all foreign policy actions of the fascist party and the German government. At the same time, on a large scale [130] , the replacement of responsible officials of German diplomatic institutions abroad, primarily in London, Paris, Rome, Warsaw, and Moscow, was carried out [130].

To strengthen intelligence activities against the Soviet Union, the Rosenberg department sent its permanent secret representatives to Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, and Magnitogorsk. In addition, recruitment activities were carried out in relation to employees of individual German firms, in particular the Otto Wolf firm, which had an agreement with Soviet economic institutions.

With the organization of the foreign policy department, Rosenberg received great powers to expand his agents in the south and east of Europe. Under the leadership of this department, a special Ukrainian committee operated in Vienna, which conducted propaganda on "Ukrainian affairs", established contacts with Ukrainian nationalists on the territory of Ukraine and in the centers of Ukrainian emigration, mainly in Warsaw, Paris, Prague, and Belgrade. A special intelligence bureau was also created in Vienna,

whose tasks included conducting intelligence against Soviet Ukraine, as well as establishing contacts with pro-fascist organizations in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. A similar agency for reconnaissance in the Balkans and in the Soviet Union also operated in Hungary.

Attaching particular importance to the organization of subversive activities on Soviet territory, Nazi intelligence used every opportunity to carry out espionage, sabotage, and anti-Soviet propaganda.

Under the flag of the chauvinist idea of the unity of the German nation, the Nazis intended to subjugate all Germans on the globe to their influence, believing that they should serve the interests of Germany alone. Proceeding from this, Hitler's intelligence launched active work to establish contacts and involve Germans who had migrated from Germany and lived in the Ukraine, the Caucasus, the Volga region, Central Asia, and other regions in subversive activities against the USSR. Under the guise of helping the settlers, the department of foreign Germans, created at the direction of the National Socialist Party, and the fascist intelligence agencies systematically sent parcels and money transfers from Germany to the USSR in order to recruit new agents.

Infiltrated agents of the Abwehr and the Gestapo sought out politically unstable persons among the recipients of postal items from Germany to carry out subversive actions. In order to involve Soviet citizens of German origin in espionage work, the intelligence services of fascist Germany acted by all means available to them: blackmail, threats, bribery, etc.

The German embassy in Moscow, diplomatic missions and other representations actively participated in the collection of espionage information. German intelligence diplomats involved in espionage against the Soviet Union many employees of the diplomatic missions of Austria, Turkey and some other capitalist states, representatives of various firms, joint-stock companies and other organizations involved in the construction of new enterprises on the territory of the USSR.

To recruit agents and organize reconnaissance and subversive activities on the territory of the USSR, the Nazis used Germany's business connections. It was for these purposes that the Russian committee of German industry was created in Germany, headed by the experienced intelligence officer Chunke. Employees of German commercial and industrial institutions located in the USSR were carefully selected, underwent special [131] intelligence training, and only after that they were sent for "commercial" activities in the Soviet Union.

One of the legal covers for the fascist agents was the supreme church council - the governing body of the Lutheran church, which maintained contact with the pastors who were in the USSR. From some of them, intelligence received information about the economy and political situation in the Soviet Union. German intelligence actively used the Germans - preachers of sectarian groups (Mennonites and Adventists) that existed in Moscow, Leningrad, the Volga region, the Central Asian republics, Azerbaijan, the Ordzhonikidze region. Fascist intelligence agencies completely subordinated to their influence the centers of Ukrainian, Armenian, and Georgian bourgeois-nationalist organizations located in Germany.

The exposure of agents of the German intelligence services abandoned in the USSR showed that the fascist scouts sought to obtain information not only about the quantity and quality of weapons and military equipment, but also about strategic points and approaches to them, terrain, bridges, and crossings; this indicated that German spies were collecting the data needed to develop a plan to attack the Soviet Union.

The process of creating a fascist total reconnaissance apparatus and the process of forming the Wehrmacht proceeded in parallel, in mutual connection. They were basically completed by 1935. A huge number of institutions and organizations were involved in intelligence activities, and mass agents were created at home and abroad. However, in its activities hostile to the USSR, the German intelligence service suffered a complete defeat.

3. The transformation of Germany into a state of war: political and economic preparations for aggression

With the advent of the Nazis to power, feverish preparations for war unfolded, which became the main content of the activity of the German fascist state. The domestic and foreign policy of Nazi Germany, its economy, official science and culture, the system of primary, secondary and higher education, sports, the entire gigantic propaganda machine were aimed at forced militarization of the country. What the German communists warned about, their leader E. Telman, even before the Nazis seized power, was confirmed: "Hitler is war!"

The facts completely refute the fiction of the reactionary bourgeois historians, that in his policy Hitler always improvised and was drawn into the war against his will. In fact, the ruling circles of fascist Germany were preparing for a total war consciously, systematically, at an unprecedented pace, with exceptional purposefulness, diabolical energy. Whereas in Weimar Germany militarization was carried out implicitly, methodically, with a certain observance, at least outwardly, of international treaty obligations, the fascist regime immediately gave a frenzied dispersal of all activities in preparation for aggression—economic, political, ideological, and military.

Having defeated the progressive organizations, and at the same time discarding the bourgeois-democratic institutions and orders as "rotten", which prevented the state from concentrating the efforts of the state on the rapid build-up of military potential, the Nazis unconditionally announced the complete subordination of all spheres of public life to the policy of militarization. The leaders [132] of the Nazi state set out to create the most powerful military machine in the world as soon as possible in order to carry out the crazy plans of establishing the world domination of German imperialism. They openly challenged the centuries-old international legal norms and, as the armed forces strengthened, they more and more resolutely switched to predatory methods of unilateral actions and "fait accompli".

Having received the powers of the Reich Chancellor, Hitler immediately demonstrated the special attention of the new regime to the Reichswehr. On the morning of January 31, 1933, the day after the formation of the fascist government of "national concentration", he spoke to the personnel of a number of units. On February 3, the Fuhrer detailed the main goals and principles of Nazi policy to the command of the Reichswehr. The confidential program statement meant that the criminal goals and methods of the Nazi Party, long known to the world community through oral and printed speeches of its leaders and pogrom actions of fascist organizations, were now elevated to the rank of state policy of the country, which occupied the second place in the capitalist world in terms of industrial power.

The new Reich Chancellor emphasized that the first goal of the government he headed was "the restoration of political power. All the efforts of the state leadership (of all its departments!) must be directed towards this." Under the "restoration of political power" he understood the reconstruction of powerful armed forces and the establishment with their support of the political hegemony of the German Empire. "The construction of the Wehrmacht," the Fuhrer emphasized, "is the most important prerequisite for achieving the goal of gaining political power."

Hitler defined two main directions in his aggressive policy: "The reconquest of new sales markets ... and, perhaps, this is the best - the capture of a new living space in the East and its merciless Germanization." He justified the need for the latter by the fact that "the living space for the German people is too small" and a "radical change" in the situation is required.

In accordance with the predatory goals, the head of the fascist government defined the main tasks of the Nazi state within the country: "A complete, radical change in the current internal political situation in Germany. No tolerance for views that hinder the achievement of our goals (pacifism). Those who do not mend must be broken. Ruthless eradication of Marxism. Instilling in young people and all the people the idea that only struggle can save us, and before this idea everything else recedes into the background ... Tempering youth and strengthening the military spirit, using all

means for this. The death penalty for treason to the country and people. The strictest authoritarian state leadership. Elimination of the cancerous tumor of democracy!" {439}

Declaring the "necessity" of introducing military service, Hitler stressed: "The state leadership must take care, first of all, that those liable for military service are not poisoned by the poison of pacifism, Marxism, Bolshevism, both before being called up for military service and after it." He called the Wehrmacht "the most important and most socialist organization of the state", making it clear to those who have not yet grasped the essence of National Socialist demagoguery, what is the meaning of the Nazis in the term "socialism". Promising the generals that the armed forces would continue to remain "non-political and non-partisan" in the sense that [133] "the struggle within the country is not their business, but the function of the Nazi organizations," the Reich Chancellor assured that no merger of the army with the SA was envisaged {440} .

In conclusion, the Fuhrer noted: "The most dangerous period is the construction of the Wehrmacht. At this time it will be revealed whether France has statesmen; if so, she will not give us this time, but will fall upon us (in all probability, together with the eastern satellites)" {441}

Consequently, already at the first meeting with the command of the Reichswehr, Hitler quite frankly and confidentially outlined the essence of the foreign, domestic, and military policy of the fascist regime. He did not hide the dangers for the country as a whole that such a policy was fraught with. Nevertheless, the generals and officers not only did not protest, but, wasting no time, launched a stormy activity, and until 1938 the leadership of the Reichswehr was given the opportunity to independently resolve all practical issues of military development. Therefore, the assertions of many bourgeois historians that the German generals until 1937 remained in the dark about Hitler's dangerous plans look completely untenable.

Fulfilling the program outlined before the command of the Reichswehr, Hitler and the reactionary imperialist forces behind him launched an all-round preparation for an aggressive war. First of all,

the Nazi leadership took care of strengthening the fascist regime and creating internal political conditions for the preparation and unleashing of such a war.

The eight-volume work "History of the German Labor Movement", created by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the SED, says: "The main task of the Hitlerite dictatorship was to break the strength of the German working class and its allies in the interests of German monopoly capital, junkers and militarists by destroying its Marxist-Leninist vanguard, the Communist Party, to enslave the working class as well as other forces of the people and make them fit for war" {442} .

Immediately after the coup, the Nazis launched repressions against the Communist Party. Goering's order banned meetings and demonstrations of this party. On February 23, 1933, the police raided the building of the Central Committee of the KKE. However, defeating the Communist Party was far from easy: it enjoyed great prestige and the trust of a significant part of the German population. In order to untie their hands and go over to open mass terror, the Nazis decided on a monstrous provocation - to set fire to the Reichstag and blame the Communists for this.

On the night of February 28, 1933, the arsonists gathered in the house of the chairman of the Reichstag, Goering. Through the underground passage, they entered the parliament building and carried out their dirty deed. Soon a government report was published, in which the communists were declared responsible for the arson. Hitler, arriving at the scene, exclaimed in the presence of numerous journalists: "This is the finger of God! Now no one will stop us from destroying the communists with an iron fist!" {443} The Nazi press excelled in its attacks on the Communists, arguing that "the fire should have served as a signal for the start of a terrible all-destroying struggle against the German nation, German culture and the German economy" {444} . [134]

Indeed, a villainous, and, moreover, by no means the last, attack on the German nation, human culture, civilization, organized by the Nazis, was committed. The flame above the Reichstag was the first

herald of those fires that soon blazed throughout Europe, marking the path of Nazi aggression.

The circumstances of the Reichstag fire were documented after the war at the Nuremberg Trials, but in the second half of the 60s, West German neo-fascists again began to distribute the Hitlerite version and even propagated it on television.

In this regard, the director of the Institute of History of the University of Bern, W. Hofer, stated: "The arson order came from the highest spheres of the Nazi Party, and it was carried out by a special team of employees of the SS and SA services" {445} . New details of the crime were also revealed. In particular, it was established that when, a year after the fire, a conflict arose between Hitler and the leadership of the fascist assault detachments, the latter made an unsuccessful attempt to transfer information about the organization of the Reichstag arson abroad. This accelerated the defeat of the leadership of the assault detachments and the destruction of the participants in the provocation.

After the Reichstag fire, anti-communism became the official state doctrine of the German Empire. The organizations of the KKE and its activists were subjected to monstrous fascist terror. Hindenburg signed the emergency laws prepared in advance "On the protection of the people and the state", "Against treason to the German people and traitorous actions", aimed at the merciless suppression of any resistance to fascism and reaction. Under the pretext of "protection against violent communist actions dangerous for the state," seven articles of the constitution were canceled, which fixed elementary bourgeois-democratic rights (freedom of the individual, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, unions, meetings, keeping the secrecy of mail correspondence, telephone conversations) . Introduced searches and arrests without warrants,{446} . A state of emergency was declared in the country. Mass raids and arrests began. On the night of February 28, 1,500 people were arrested in Berlin alone, and more than 10 thousand throughout the country. {447} On March 3, the Nazis seized the leader of the Communist Party of Germany, E. Thalmann.

Many leading figures of the KKE were destroyed by Nazi executioners during arrest or in concentration camps. The biographies and suicide letters of some of the dead party activists, carefully collected and published in the GDR, reveal their high morale, loyalty to their people and communist ideals {448} . The party was forced to send abroad members of the Central Committee of the KKE - W. Pieck, W. Ulbricht, W. Florin, F. Heckert, and other prominent figures.

Undertaking a campaign "for the eradication of Marxism" against the organized workers' movement, the German imperialists wanted to be able to carry out the policy of war without hindrance both within the country and abroad. On March 5, 1933, elections to the Reichstag were held. Despite the ferocious terror, the Communist Party collected 4,848,000 votes⁵, which testified to the confidence of broad sections of the people in it. However, the Nazis did not allow the Communist deputies to the Reichstag and, violating all democratic laws, annulled their mandates. [135] The Communist Party of Germany was officially banned, and communist deputies who did not have time to escape were arrested.

On March 24, the Reichstag, having crossed out the Weimar constitution, granted emergency powers to Hitler's government. In his hands, in fact, concentrated all the legislative and executive power. Representatives of the bourgeois parties supported the creation of an open terrorist dictatorship. For example, on March 30, 1933, a statement was published by the faction of the Catholic Party of the Center in the Cologne municipality (leader - K. Adenauer). It said: "We welcome the destruction of communism and the suppression of Marxism, carried out now on such a scale that was impossible during the entire post-war period" {449}. At the beginning of August 1934, after the death of Hindenburg, the presidency was abolished, and Hitler officially concentrated all control of the country in his hands. Deputies to the Reichstag were no longer elected - they were appointed by the fascist leaders {450} .

Having come to power, the Nazis set themselves the goal of exterminating the advanced part of the proletariat. The workers' and democratic organizations were crushed. The terror of the fascists

was primarily directed against the communists. Of the 300 thousand people who were in the party by the beginning of 1933, 150 thousand were persecuted, were thrown into prisons and concentration camps, tens of thousands of party members were killed {451} . Terror was also extended to the Social Democrats, whose right-wing leaders played such an unseemly role, actually contributing to the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in Germany. In total, 200 thousand people were destroyed throughout the country; about a million languished in prison.

In early May 1933, the Nazis dispersed the trade unions. The so-called "German Labor Front" created by them, which included both workers and entrepreneurs, was supposed to demonstrate the absence of class contradictions in the fascist state. His task was to completely subordinate the workers to the entrepreneurs and to assign them to the enterprises. According to the well-known German economist Yu. Kuchinsky, "in the course of about a hundred days, all the basic bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms that they had won over a hundred years of hard fighting were taken away and destroyed from the German workers" {452} .

The reprisal against the communists, in the opinion of the Nazis, was supposed not only to strengthen fascism inside the country, but also to ensure the sympathy of the bourgeois West, to put the German imperialists at the head of the reactionary forces in Europe. The conservative press of the democratic states, writes G. Jacobsen, expressed its "respectful understanding of the measures to rally the national front in Germany, and it emphasized above all the defensive actions announced by Hitler against Bolshevism" {453} .

Fascist Germany was gradually turning into an international base for the counter-revolution. In the struggle against the revolutionary movement, the Gestapo collaborated with the police of Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and other countries. An international police commission was set up in Vienna, chaired by Himmler. The conferences of this "political police" were attended by representatives of 50 capitalist states. The Nazis [136] established especially close contacts with the police organizations of Czechoslovakia and Poland, which transmitted to embassies and

consulates, and sometimes directly to the Gestapo, materials on the foreign activities of German anti-fascists. Characteristically, the Polish police cracked down on those German anti-fascists who warned of an impending German attack on Poland.{454} .

From September 21 to December 23, 1933, a provocative trial took place in Leipzig in the case of the Reichstag fire. The organizers of the fire put on trial an outstanding figure in the international communist movement G. Dimitrov, in whose person the court was to accuse the Communist Party of Germany, the Comintern, the Soviet Union. The Leipzig process was intended to give the Nazis an ideological weapon for the anti-Soviet war.

Against G. Dimitrov, the Nazis mobilized the entire state-police apparatus. Playing the role of witnesses, policemen, spies, provocateurs appeared before the court. Even Goering and Goebbels spoke, who hoped to decisively influence the course of the trial. But Dimitrov, who managed to turn it into a trial of fascism, overturned all the plans of the Nazis. The powerful wave of the anti-fascist movement throughout the world, Dimitrov's courageous and skillful defense of the cause of communism, his exposure of provocateurs and the fascist trial - all this led the Leipzig trial to a shameful failure. The Nazis were unable to prove Dimitrov's involvement in the fire. Recognizing the virtually complete lack of evidence of the accusation, the court was forced to acquit the fearless revolutionary. Fascism suffered a major moral and political defeat.

The Leipzig process, moreover, clearly showed that the Communist Party of Germany is a great force and is fighting against the Nazi regime. Not a single bourgeois party, and with them the Social Democratic party, took the path of resolute opposition to the Nazis. Their deputies of the Reichstag behaved shamefully. On May 17, 1933, when Hitler issued a statement on foreign policy, imbued with a desire for military revenge, they voted in favor of a resolution stating that the Reichstag unanimously supported Hitler's imperial government {455} .

The passivity and even servility of the leaders of the Social Democracy did not satisfy the fascists: they were worried about the

presence of workers in the party. That is why, following the communist one, they banned the social democratic and other (except the national socialist) political parties. All the bourgeois parties hastened to declare their own dissolution.

And only the Communist Party of Germany, the Nazis failed to break. Despite heavy losses from the fascist terror, it continued its noble struggle for peace, democracy, and socialism even in the deep underground, promptly putting forward new strategic and tactical tasks. The greatest courage and selflessness was shown by the German communists, whose party lived and acted throughout the years of the fascist dictatorship and the Second World War as a truly proletarian party, faithful to Marxism-Leninism. The hopes of the fascist leadership for the complete "unity of the nation" in the war for the world domination of the German monopolies turned out to be untenable. A secret Gestapo circular dated June 3, 1935, stated: "The Communist Party of Germany, which is in an illegal position, not only does not stop its activity, but continues it on a large scale" {456} This recognition [137] of a class enemy is evidence of the heroism of the German communists.

As the true face of the fascist dictatorship was revealed, opposition to the regime arose even in Hitler's assault detachments, reflecting the discontent of the deceived petty bourgeoisie and middle strata. Under the influence of the demagoguery and terror of the Nazis, the unsurmountable consequences of the crisis of 1929-1933, the ranks of the SA grew from half a million in 1933 to 4 million in 1934 {457} . Feeling their "strength of numbers", ordinary stormtroopers and even junior commanders began to talk quite loudly about the need for a "second revolution" {458}. In the middle of 1934 unrest broke out in the SA detachments of Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt am Main, Dresden, Essen, Dortmund, Kassel, Königsberg and Freiburg. The leaders of the SA, led by Remus, tried to use the fermentation for their own purposes. They sought to advance by turning the assault troops into the basis of the regular armed forces. Concerned Hitler, on the pretext of participating in the wedding of Gauleiter Terboven, arrived in Essen, where he turned to Krupp for advice. Having received it, he immediately flew to Munich, from where he gave the

order to destroy the leaders of the assault detachments. On the night of June 30, 1934, called the "night of long knives", as well as on July 1 and 2, with the personal participation of the Fuhrer, a bloody massacre was committed against the leadership of the SA. In his speech to the Reichstag on July 13, 1934, Hitler announced that 71 people had been shot. In fact, the number of those killed exceeded 1070,{459} The subsequent "cleansing" of the detachments were removed 200 thousand attack aircraft. Along the way, Hitler settled scores with leaders of the bourgeois opposition and some generals who did not show due respect for the military knowledge of the recent corporal. Among those killed were General von Schleicher, who for a long time was the closest employee of the Hindenburg and headed the German government, as well as General Bredov. Hindenburg was not outraged by the murders; he even sent a telegram of thanks to Hitler for his decisiveness in reprisal against the dissatisfied.

The leadership of the Reichswehr took an active part in the preparation and conduct of the action on June 30th. The Reichswehr was put on full alert and assisted the SS in mass arrests and executions without trial or investigation. The Minister of the Reichswehr ordered to explain to all officers that the "rehabilitation" of the killed generals was out of the question {460} . In this regard, O. Vinzer, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GDR, rightly noted: "In the name of armament and preparation for war, then, as today, the militarists, whose ideal was and remains the field marshal in the presidential chair, were always ready to take part in any shameful case" {461}. Assessing the significance of this bloody action, one of Hitler's closest henchmen, A. Rosenberg, wrote in his diary: "The NSDAP has cleared its way to complete the creation of the Third Reich" {462} .

With the establishment of the fascist regime, the persecution against the Jewish population of Germany intensified. In 1933-1935. [138] laws were issued forbidding Jews to work in state institutions, to serve in the army; they were deprived of citizenship rights, marriages with "Aryans" were forbidden. Soon the Nazis switched to direct terror, organizing pogroms and inhuman reprisals.

Subsequently, the Jews were transferred to the disposal of the SS, the Gestapo and destroyed in the death camps. The Nazis believed that by participating in these massacres, the Germans would become imbued with the consciousness of their racial superiority over other peoples.

In the interests of strengthening the regime and preparing the country for war, the Nazis continuously increased the centralization of the state. Having eliminated all representative institutions and elected positions, they consistently put into practice the principle of the Fuhrer, according to which subordinates were appointed by their superiors and unconditionally obeyed him. At the top of the hierarchy stood the "Fuhrer and Reich Chancellor of the German Empire."

There was a merging of the party and state apparatus. On December 1, 1933, the law "On Ensuring the Unity of the Party and the State" was issued, the first paragraph of which stated that the Nazi Party "is the bearer of the ideas of the state and is inseparable from the state, its structure will be part of the people's law, and its organization will be determined by the will of the Fuhrer" {463} . Almost all the leaders of Nazi Germany combined state and party positions.

In accordance with the law of January 30, 1934, the rights of self-government of the provinces and lands were abolished, where the posts of imperial governors were established. In some lands, the governor himself headed the cabinet of ministers, in others he had the right to appoint and dismiss the chairman and members of the government, as well as officials and judges. The Nazis divided the country into 32 Gaus (regions), which were headed by Gauleiters appointed by Hitler.

The establishment and strengthening of the fascist regime, the merciless suppression and destruction of progressive organizations and all dissenters, the strictest centralization of the state, the concentration of power in the hands of the most reactionary, aggressive and adventurist forces of German imperialism, ready to do anything in the name of carrying out predatory plans, created the

most important state-political prerequisites for preparation and conduct of a total war for world domination.

At the same time, the German imperialists launched the country's military and economic preparations. They took into account the experience of the First World War, when the Kaiser General Staff and the government underestimated the importance of the timely deployment of the military economy, and long before the Nazis came to power (in 1924-1929), with the active participation of American and British capital, they created a military-industrial potential. Therefore, the rise in military production, which was noted after the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, was a continuation of the previous course, but with the use of new methods and incomparable pace and scope with the previous decade. In the face of Hitler, the German monopolies finally found what they had been looking for for a long time. They knew that back in the autumn of 1931, Hitler had declared: "If I now come to power, I will call the Minister of War and ask him: "What will total armament cost?" And if he demands 20, 40, 60 and even 100 billion marks, he will certainly receive them, and then we will arm ourselves, arm ourselves, arm ourselves to full readiness, and then ... "When one of the participants in the conversation remarked: "Then the world will unite again against Germany. You will get the second world war, which you will lose in the same way that we lost the first." [139] Hitler replied: "I will order to shoot everyone who will let it slip ..." The interlocutor tried to object, but Hitler literally growled: "Shoot, shoot ..." { 464} "a business".

As chairman of the union of German industrialists, G. Krupp presented to Hitler a project for the reorganization of the country's industry in order to accelerate the rearmament of the Reichswehr. His firm was one of the first to start mass production of military products. "Instead of trucks, tanks appeared on conveyors, and thousands of steel blanks harvested in previous years ... began to turn into gun barrels. At the Kiel shipyards, Krupp began extensive construction of submarines, minesweepers, and destroyers ... When Goering announced the revival of the Luftwaffe, Krupp was already openly testing a new anti-aircraft gun on the Baltic coast .

Other concerns capable of increasing the production of weapons also received large military orders from the government. Among the monopoly associations, which did a lot for the restructuring of industry already in the first year of the fascist dictatorship, the Flick concern {466} stood out . In April 1933, the head of the largest firm Thyssen, on the direct instructions of Hitler, held a meeting with representatives of the aviation industry, at which it was decided to sharply increase the production of combat aircraft of all types - from single-seat fighters to large bombers {467} . In July 1933, the question of the production of tanks and the choice of the most correct technical solutions was discussed in the development of models intended for mass production {468}. The growth rate of the German military industry can be judged from the data on the production of aircraft. In 1931, only 13 of them were produced, in 1933 - 368, in 1935 - 3183 {469} . These were predominantly military aircraft or such "civilian" ones that could easily be converted into military ones.

The old enterprises soon ceased to satisfy the needs of the Reichswehr. The construction of new ones began immediately. In the first three years of the fascist dictatorship, more than 300 military factories were put into operation, including 55-60 aviation, 45 automobile and armored, 70 military chemical, 15 military shipbuilding and 80 artillery {470} .

Of great importance in the system of measures to create a military economy was the expansion of the raw material base, which was carried out in many ways: exploration and organization of mining within the country, forced withdrawal of non-ferrous metal products from the population, restriction of the consumption of military-strategic raw materials in civilian industries, increased import of it from abroad, the development and implementation of all kinds of substitutes. For all this, already in the first years of the fascist dictatorship, up to 10 billion marks were spent.

The amount of capital investment in military production can be seen from Table 7. [140]

Table 7. Capital investment in the German economy {471}

years All investments (million marks) Including in military
production

amount (million marks) interest on all investments

1932 2590 620 24

1933 3150 720 23

1934 6760 3300 49

1935 9040 5150 57

Essentially important in the preparation for the war was the construction of roads of military strategic importance. Some highways, crossing Germany from west to east, provided a quick transfer of troops from one theater of operations to another.

As Todt, who was in charge of road construction, stated at a Nazi party congress, in 1935 120,000 people took part in the construction of freeways. 170 thousand people built other roads. In total, taking into account supplier enterprises, 440 thousand workers and employees {472} were associated with road construction . Expenses for the construction of railways increased from 805 million marks in 1932 to 1,876 million marks in 1935 {473} .

The militarization of the economy contributed to the intensification of the process of concentration of capital and the omnipotence of monopolies. According to the data of the German Statistical Office, at the end of 1935 the share of concerns in the total amount of share capital was: in the coal industry - 82.4 percent, in ferrous metallurgy - 76.6, in the production of electricity - 85.2 percent. Even then, the concerns controlled 85 percent of the total share capital {474}. A particularly large role belonged to IG Farbenindustry, Steel Trust, the General Electricity Company, and the Krupp concern. Firms that represented the rapidly developing branches of military production were rapidly gaining strength. Among them, the leading place was occupied by the Krupp concern. The number of its workers increased rapidly and at the end of 1935 amounted to 90 thousand people. The concern was a gigantic complex of metallurgical, machine-building, tank, artillery, automobile, aircraft, and

shipbuilding plants. Its turnover rose from 191 million marks in 1932/33 to 896 million marks in 1936/37. {475}. During this time, the turnover of the Siemens and IG Farbenindustry concerns doubled, and the Junkers concern increased eight to nine times. The Zeiss concern took an active part in the armament of fascist Germany, which manufactured precision optical instruments, so necessary in artillery, aviation, and on warships.

V. I. Lenin emphasized that "the capitalist economy "for war" (that is, the economy connected directly or indirectly with military supplies) is a systematic, legalized embezzlement ...) {476} . Lenin's words are fully confirmed by data on funding sources [141]the military economy of fascist Germany, which required huge funds from the state budget. The foreign exchange reserves of the Reichsbank were comparatively small. Germany's gold reserve was only about 900 million marks, it was only enough for the first year and a half of the fascist dictatorship, so the main source of funding was an increase in all kinds of extortions from the workers: direct and indirect taxes, forcibly placed state loans, extortions to the "labor front" fund etc. The Nazis also widely resorted to direct robbery of the population and public organizations. So, they seized the cash desks of the disbanded bourgeois parties and the crushed trade unions.

On June 12, 1933, the law "On the Protection of the German National Economy" was issued, which authorized the robbery of persons of "non-Aryan origin" and all those objectionable to the Nazis. According to Mine, thanks to another law ("On high treason"), 100 million marks {477} were obtained .

One of the forms of financing the armaments program was the issuance of government short-term interest-free bills and the so-called "promissory notes for the creation of works." In 1933-1938. was issued for 12 billion marks of "mepho-bills" (bills without real security) {478} . The law "On the Reduction of Unemployment" of June 1, 1933, provided for the implementation of large-scale works using forced labor of the unemployed for a penny remuneration. 4 million unemployed took part in the gigantic military preparations of the first years of the fascist dictatorship. This enabled the Hitlerite

government to boastfully announce a "successful" solution to the problem of employment of the labor force and, at the same time, to save large sums of money in the creation of a military economy.

Part of the investment in military production came from the profits of the monopolies, which thus increased their fixed capital. Profits of the largest military concerns grew especially fast. Thus, the net profit of the IG Farbenindustry concern increased from 71 million marks in 1923 to 153 million marks in 1936 {479} . The profits of the Steel Trust rose from 121 million marks in 1934 to 257 million marks in three years {480} . Krupp's enrichment proceeded even more rapidly, and the profits of the concern were in direct proportion to the number of military orders received. Table 8 shows this.

Table 8. Growing profits of the Krupp group {481}

years	Number of military orders			Profit (million marks)
1932/	33	9	7	
1933/	34	53	12	
1934/	35	62	60	
1935	/36	80	91	

Direct management of economic preparation for the war in 1933-1935. carried out by the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of War. [142] As early as 1933, J. Schacht, the Minister of Economy, organized an accurate accounting of enterprises that were most important militarily. Economic plans were developed for the production of 200 major types of military materials, as well as a plan for preparing agriculture for war. In 1935 ration cards were prepared and sent to the localities. Schacht was worried that they would not become known abroad, because "such an event would be regarded as preparation for the upcoming war and thus as proof of the aggressive intentions of Germany" {482} .

Secretly issued on May 21, 1935, the law "On the Defense of the Empire" introduced the position of Plenipotentiary General for the War Economy, who was entrusted with the leadership of preparing the economy for war, and in wartime, the mobilization of "all

economic forces for the conduct of war" {483} . Schacht was appointed to this post. However, his competence did not extend to the military industry, which was managed by the War Department through the military and economic headquarters, headed by Colonel (later General) Thomas. All military-economic mobilization measures were to be carried out by the Plenipotentiary General for the War Economy and the Minister of War in close cooperation {484}.

Along with the rapid development of the military industry, economic preparation provided for: the achievement of autarky {485} in the supply of raw materials; uniform dispersal of industrial facilities throughout the country; an increase in the production capacity of enterprises serving and feeding the war; conducting technical reconstruction and rationalization in militarily important industries {486} .

The German monopolies not only diligently carried out the tasks of the fascist government and the organs of economic preparation for war, but they themselves took the initiative, suggesting to the Nazi leaders measures that soon acquired the force of laws and were strictly carried out. The industrialist Rechling, in a note to Hitler "Thoughts Concerning the Preparation for and Conduct of War," proposed to proceed from the fact that war is inevitable and one must prepare for it "by all means." "The coming war," he noted, "will be primarily a war of technology..." {487}, without division into front and rear. The monopolists discussed with representatives of the military ministry the use of various weapons supplied by the concerns. The director of the Krupp firm, G. Kupke, consulted with representatives of the Wehrmacht about the preparation of replacement wheelsets for transporting 280-mm guns in order to ensure the transition to the Russian railway track {488} .

In the memorandum of IG Farbenindustrie, presented in 1935 to the armaments council of the imperial ministry of defense, it was stated : from the interests of subordination in the future of all productive [143]forces to prepare for the fulfillment of one task - this means creating (naturally, using the experience gained during the war) a new military economic organization that will put all men and women, all production facilities and machines, all raw materials at

the service of military production. And all this will be covered by an economic organization subordinate to a strict military leadership. All products of industry, crafts, and crafts, as well as agriculture, are in this sense of military importance and therefore must be included in the framework of a comprehensive war economy " {489} .

IG Farbenindustry was concerned about the shortage of labor that was inevitable in the event of a major war, and advised the Department of Defense to take into account the fact that a skilled worker "in his workplace ... will be able to make a more valuable contribution to the overall defense of the country than his service with arms in hand. The memorandum also proposed that "the preparation of detailed mobilization plans for industrial enterprises, vital enterprises of crafts and trades, as well as for all branches of agriculture, which together, without any exception, are of vital importance ..." {490} . Not only were such plans prepared in the Ministry of Defense, but the barbaric idea was also ripening to force the use of foreign workers in the industry and agriculture of Germany.

In order not to stop the influx of capital and military-strategic raw materials, the monopolists advised Hitler to assure the Western powers of their loyalty to them, which completely coincided with the Fuhrer's calculations. Constantly reminding representatives of the ruling circles of the United States, Britain, and France of his hatred for the Soviet Union and plans for war only with it, he sought to take full advantage of their economic and political support.

A new stage in the economic preparation for war began with the introduction of the "four-year plan" for the deployment of military production, which was developed in 1935-1936, and in September 1936 approved by the Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg. A month earlier, Hitler had issued a secret memorandum on economic preparations for war. It ended with a very definite directive: "1) in four years we must have a combat-ready army, 2) in four years the German economy must be ready for war" {491} . Thus, the date of the unleashing of the world war was already determined - no later than 1940.

4. The transformation of Germany into a state of war: the ideological and military-theoretical preparation for aggression, the development of the armed forces

In the process of preparing for the war, the fascist regime, having created a ramified and powerful apparatus, launched the ideological indoctrination of the population on an unprecedented scale. "After the Nazis came to power," notes the Australian author E. Bramsted, "their propaganda acquired a total character, it was not limited only to the immediate political sphere, but covered the entire field of cultural activity of the state ... had to penetrate into all pores of society" {492} . In 1933, the Ministry of Propaganda was formed, headed by Goebbels, one of the main torchbearers of the Second World War. [144]

Public education, the press, radio, libraries, museums, theatres, cinemas—the ministry took control of all the means of spiritual culture and placed them at the service of the aggressive policy of the Nazis.

Summing up some of the results of the indoctrination of the German population, Hess said in May 1935: "The impact of new ideas in Germany extends not only to politics, but also to culture as a whole, in the comprehensive sense of the word: art and literature, science and economics, on the country's defense forces and on the labor force, on society and the family. In all its forms, the life of the people is influenced or changed by the policy of National Socialism" {493} .

Considering propaganda as one of the main means of strengthening their dominance and preparing the population for war, the Nazis annually increased the budget allocations to the Goebbels ministry: in 1934 they amounted to 26.1 million marks, in 1935 - 40.8 million and in 1938 G. increased to 70.7 million marks {494} .

Complementing the methods of terror, propaganda was supposed to ensure the complete control of the fascists over the thoughts and feelings of the masses. Dressler-Andress, the head of Nazi radio broadcasting, formulated the main task of propaganda in this way: "Total impact on the people, ensuring a unified reaction to events ..." {495} . Propaganda, Hitler admonished, should be directed

"principally to the senses and only to a very limited extent calculated on the so-called reason ... The more modest its scientific ballast, the more it concentrates its attention on the feelings of the masses, the greater its success" {496} . The Fuhrer was echoed by Goebbels. Propaganda, he wrote, "does not have as its task to be spiritualized ... It should by no means be decent, scrupulous, gentle, or humble; its task is to ensure success..." {497}. The Nazis saw the task of all propaganda in a massive ideological and psychological impact on the masses by instilling loud fascist-militarist slogans that expressed the essence of their political and military doctrine: "Germany, wake up!", "Germany is above all!", "Down with Versailles!", " People, to arms!", "We will march on!", "We are heading to the East!", "We will put an end to communism!" .

The characteristic features of Nazi propaganda were its monopoly position in the country and reliance on the entire apparatus of state violence. In essence, it was about massive ideological coercion. In 1933, one senior officer of the Propaganda Ministry frankly wrote: "The use of force can be part of propaganda. Between force and propaganda lies varying degrees of effective influence on the people and masses: from the sudden attention or friendly persuasion of an individual to crackling mass propaganda, from poorly organized adherents to the creation of parastatal or state institutions, from individual terror to mass terror, from the sanctioned use of force. stronger ... to military coercion to obedience and discipline according to the laws of war" {498}.

The main efforts of Goebbels' propaganda were concentrated on the ideological and psychological preparation of the masses for an aggressive [145] war. At first subtly, and then more and more openly, she inspired the idea of the necessity and inevitability of the struggle for "living space". The German people were declared "a people without space", undeservedly deprived of history. By this the Nazis explained the economic difficulties, the decline in the standard of living of the working people {499} . To the population, especially the landless and landless peasants, they pointed out the "way to the East" as the only possible way to fulfill their hopes.

In 1933, the demand put forward by the German reaction back in the late 1920s to make geopolitics the "geographical conscience of the state" was realized. Geopolitics was elevated to the rank of an official "science", studied at all universities of the "Third Reich". The "Union of Geopolitics" created by the Nazis called in its printed organ: "Do not limit yourself to the framework of a narrow, small space, but think on the scale of great and vast spaces, on the scale of continents and oceans, and follow this path for your Fuhrer! .. To the one who supports the Fuhrer in people's struggle for living space requires not only scope, but also endurance and steadfastness" {500} . What official propaganda still kept silent about - the establishment of the world domination of German imperialism - geopolitics began to openly preach.

To substantiate the "legality" of aggression and the "right" of the fascist state to seize and enslave other peoples, racial theory and national-chauvinist ideas closely related to it were used. Inspiring the Germans that they, as the "chosen people", were determined by "fate" and "blood" to rule, Nazi propaganda brought up an arrogant attitude and contempt for other peoples. Racial theory was repeatedly rebuilt by the Nazis in accordance with the needs of the current foreign policy. Thus, as we drew closer to Italy and Japan on the basis of the joint preparation of aggression, there was a "reassessment" of the racial qualities of Italians and Japanese. The Italians, who the Nazis had previously attributed to the "low-value Mediterranean race", were soon declared "worthy" descendants of the proud Romans, and the Japanese, previously called by contemptuous nicknames, erected on a pedestal of the "chosen race" of Asia, the "Aryans of the East." The attitude towards the Slavs remained unchanged as representatives of the "lower race", whom the fascist barbarians planned to enslave and exterminate, and to populate their lands with the Germans.

Defining the racial struggle as the main driving force of social development, the Nazis sought to distract the working people from the class struggle. They tried to turn the hatred of the workers and other sections of the working people towards the capitalists into hatred towards other nations. In Germany itself, the Jews, whom

fascist propaganda declared guilty of all the troubles of the German people, were to serve as such a "lightning rod".

Racial theory was also used by the Nazis to justify the dominance of fascism and its ideology. In 1933, at the Nazi Party Congress, Hitler declared racial purity the only prerequisite for a "correct" worldview: "A people, racially pure, in accordance with its pure essence, instinctively takes adequate positions in all vital questions... racial elements, it all depends on which worldview of which of them will prevail in the ideological struggle. The merit of National Socialism, the Fuhrer argued, "above all that it helped to win the worldview, reflecting the instinctive needs of German [146] blood" {501}. In this regard, racist theory was widely used to justify terror, cruel repressions against dissidents. All those who fought against fascism were declared "unclean" in racial terms and, as carriers of a worldview "alien" to the German race, were subject to extermination.

At the Nazi Party Congress in 1935, racial "science" was declared "the most important basis of the National Socialist understanding of nature and human history", "the basis ... of the legislation of the National Socialist Reich" {502} . The chief theoretician of racism, Professor G. Günther, was awarded the "Science Prize" {503} established for the first time by this congress.

The core of the fascist ideology and the main direction of its propaganda was anti-communism. The Nazis portrayed communism and the first socialist state as "enemies of the whole world", and declared the "third empire" a "bastion of Western civilization", demanding that it be given complete freedom in matters of armament and organizing a "crusade" to the East. In this spirit, they launched a propaganda campaign not only in Germany itself, but also outside it, trying to influence public opinion in the West, to persuade the governments of European states to support German rearmament measures and plans of aggression against the Land of the Soviets. Nazi anti-communist propaganda was closely connected with diplomacy, which based its calculations on the maximum use of the anti-Soviet sentiments of the ruling circles of England, France, the USA, Poland, and other capitalist countries.

Fascist leaders and diplomats assured that Germany was arming only to ensure its own security and protect other European states from the "threat of Bolshevism." So, on December 18, 1935, Hitler told the Polish ambassador in Berlin that his only desire was to prevent "Russia's advance to the West", that he was "for the solidarity of the countries of Europe, but it should not go further than the Polish-Soviet border ... How can associate yourself with Soviet Russia, which is preaching world revolution?" {504}. At the same time, he told his associates something else: "I will have to play ball with capitalism and restrain the powers of Versailles with the help of the specter of Bolshevism, forcing them to believe that Germany is the last bulwark against the red flood. For us, this is the only way to survive the critical period, to deal with Versailles and re-arm" {505} . According to the English sociologist Ziemann, the Fuhrer's simple tricks ensured his complete success, for those who wanted to be deceived turned out to be deceived. Anti-communist propaganda convinced Europeans of the acceptability of Hitler's dictatorship and that Germany, a bulwark against Bolshevism, should be allowed to increase its power {506}. In the first months, Hitler was still afraid of the opposition of the Western powers, and this kept him from taking excessive risks, but convinced of their connivance, he increasingly acted with the impudence inherent in the fascists.

Hitler, who came to power with the sympathy of the US and British monopolists, with the help of which he continued to arm himself, did not at all intend [147] to turn Germany into an instrument of their policy. The German imperialists pursued their own goals: to radically reshape the world, create a grandiose colonial empire, crush capitalist competitors, a socialist state, and win world domination. As a result, the anti-communism of the German fascists was closely associated with racism, geopolitics, and other components of their ideology, which was all permeated with an aggressive spirit, "justifying" predatory aspirations in any direction.

The true essence of the intentions of fascist German imperialism was expressed in the idea of "empire". Nazi ideologists argued that the desire to create a "great German empire", "longing for the empire" is

eternally inherent in the German people. However, external enemies and strife among the Germans themselves prevented the full implementation of this idea. The "Third Empire" created by the Nazis is finally called upon to accomplish what the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" and the "Second Empire" failed to do. Such "ideas" are saturated, for example, in a book written by the leaders of the "Third Reich" with the odious title "People to Arms!", especially the chapter "The Fate of the Germans. Longing for the empire" {507}. It quite definitely outlines the main directions of fascist aggression - to the west and to the east. France and Russia were declared eternal and irreconcilable enemies of Germany, who always stood in the way of creating a "great empire" by her. These thoughts were not new, they were developed by Bismarck, and since the appearance of *Mein Kampf* they have constituted the ideological baggage of the Nazi Party in the field of foreign policy.

The militaristic essence of the Nazi ideology was concentrated in the theory of violence. While glorifying war, she saw violence as the main driving force in human history. The press, literature, and art propagated the miserable and misanthropic "thoughts" of the Fuhrer about the war, expressed by him in *Mein Kampf* and numerous speeches. In his keynote speech on the attitude of Nazism to the Reichswehr, he stated: "If people want to live, they are forced to kill their own kind ... Not only individuals, but entire nations, as long as they exist in this world, are forced to defend their life rights in the struggle. In reality, there is no difference between war and peace... Struggle has always been and will be, and it constantly requires the full dedication of human strength. Weapons and forms of struggle, means and tactics may change, but the combat use of human lives remains unchanged.{508} Hitler argued that "the rights and claims of the German nation" could only be realized by "means of power politics" {509} up to and including "the use of a sharp German sword" {510}

Propagating such sayings of the Fuhrer, the Nazi press, broadcasting, school, literature, and art planted in the country the spirit of militarism, the cult of soldiery. Prussian military traditions were sung. The German conquerors rose to the shield, and among

them, especially Frederick II. So, one of the fascist newspapers wrote: "... we need a soldier's heroic understanding of history, which teaches admiration for Frederick the Great for the courage of despair with which he fought against a whole world of enemies, and for what, as Clausewitz says, he felt " the pride of a glorious death." We need an understanding of history that sees [148] the Battle of Tannenberg as a classic example of how the will to win can accomplish seemingly impossible things. We need an understanding of history that teaches that it is possible to overcome fate." {511}

Even the concept of "socialism" was interpreted by the Nazis in a Prussian-militarist spirit. In a lecture on "The Youth and German Socialism" delivered by Goebbels at the end of 1933, it was proclaimed: "Our socialism is inherited from the Prussian army and Prussian officials. This is the socialism that made possible the Seven Years' War of Frederick the Great and his grenadiers." {512}

Fascist war propaganda parasitized German history and culture. The actions of the ancient Germans during the Great Migration Period, the campaigns of Friedrich Barbarossa, the German knight dogs, the legends of Germanic heroes, the tales of the Nibelungs, and works of art on these topics, such as Wagner's operas, were used to emotionally influence the German population. From the works of the great representatives of German philosophy, science, literature, art - Hegel, Fichte, Kant, Goethe, and others - everything was carefully selected and presented in a falsified form that at least to some extent contributed to the preparation of the people for war.

The anti-Versailles campaign occupied a special place in justifying the rearmament of Germany and the aggressive policy of fascism. The Nazis capitalized on the hurt feelings of the German people, generated by the imperialist peace conditions that were imposed on defeated Germany. They directed their main efforts to the struggle for the abolition of those articles of the Treaty of Versailles that hindered accelerated rearmament and tied their hands for aggression. The propaganda campaign was carried out under the demagogic slogans of "freedom", "equality" for the Germans, their "right to self-determination". They understood the liberation of the German state from international obligations, the abolition of

restrictions for it in the field of weapons and the annexation of all territories with a German population.

On June 28, 1934, one of the newspapers of the German financial magnates, the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, pointedly noted: "It is no coincidence that the Treaty of Versailles, for the first time in the history of peace treaties, does not include a formula in which the belligerents would agree ... on mutual agreement in a lasting peace." The author of the article concluded that "this world ... binds us only in fact, but not morally." Further, he substantiated the inevitability of "upheavals", that is, war, and emphasized: "The new Germany does not want a mechanical revision, a blind restoration of everything that was," but seeks "the reorganization of all of Europe."

The Propaganda Ministry launched active work in order to mobilize the creative intelligentsia, seeking to use it in the spiritual corruption of the population and the spread of fascist ideology. To carry out these tasks, it involved all its departments (cinema, theater, fine arts, music, literature, radio, higher and secondary education, and others). Prominent representatives of the intelligentsia in each department were filed personal files with detailed information, as well as information from informers about the extent to which the activities of this person met the requirements of the regime. Faithful servants of fascism were encouraged, opponents and hesitators were first summoned to a "conversation", more like a police interrogation, where they used [149]all means of intimidation and coaxing; The "incurable" were sent to concentration camps. Acting in close contact with the Gestapo, the Ministry of Propaganda, in fact, was one of its links. All propaganda efforts were concentrated on poisoning the consciousness of the German people and throwing them into the heat of war in the name of the interests of German imperialism. Clearing the way for fascist ideology, the Nazis confiscated all progressive literature from libraries, bookstores, and from the population. On the streets and squares of cities, primarily at universities and libraries, bonfires blazed, made of books - a precious asset of human thought. Fascist barbarians burned the works of K. Marx and F. Engels, V. I. Lenin, the classics of world literature, and the outstanding works of the German democrats. The

Nazis filled the editorial offices of newspapers and magazines, film studios, theaters, radio stations, schools, and universities, from which all progressive cultural figures were expelled. More than two thousand prominent scientists, representatives of science and art, including A. Einstein, T. Mann, A. Zweig, left the country, tens of thousands ended up in prisons and concentration camps.

Directing the spearhead of their dirty propaganda against the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, the German fascists created a special body - the "anti-Comintern", which actually became one of the main departments of the Goebbels ministry. According to a secret directive issued later, the Anti-Comintern, for the purpose of disguise, began to act as a private association.

An important place in the ideological preparation of the war was occupied by the so-called "Ostforschung" {513} , which originated in the second half of the 19th century and was associated from the very beginning with the aggressive policy of German imperialism. To justify this policy, theses were put forward about the "cultural and economic mission of the Germans in the East" and the "Slav danger".

A special place among the numerous institutes of the "Ostforschung" belonged to the Institute of Eastern Europe in Breslau (Wroclaw), which was led by G. Koch. In Koenigsberg, these issues were dealt with by the Economic Institute for the Study of Russia and the Eastern States, headed by T. Oberländer, who, like Koch, committed the gravest crimes during the war years. There were Russian and Ukrainian research institutes in Berlin, an Ostland Institute in Danzig (Gdansk), and so on. {514} All of them "studied the East" mainly in relation to the preparation of the war against the USSR and other Eastern European states. Like other institutions, the institutes not only published numerous books, pamphlets and journals that "scientifically" substantiated the predatory claims of German imperialism, but also advised the organs of the General Staff in planning the war and implementing the policy of occupation. They prepared spies, residents, Gauleiters for the territories planned for occupation. At the opening of the school of the foreign policy department of the Hitler Party, its director Schmidt, in the presence of Rosenberg, Hess, Ribbentrop, Himmler

and other Reichsfuehrers, formulated the goals of Germany in the East as follows: "On behalf of the Fuhrrer, you will have to work in political, military and administrative positions among the Slavic peoples: Muscovites, Ukrainians[150] Teutonic and Livonian knights, with the difference that they had borders to move east, you don't have them! You are the vanguard of the victorious German race, starting its "drang nach Osten" through the swamps and steppes of the Bolshevik Muscovy. You are the beginning of the great migration of the peoples of the Germanic tribe" {515}

The leadership of the Nazi Party convened a special meeting under the slogan "The fate of Europe is in the East." The Nazi professor Maschke, in his report "The Return of the German East", claimed that the German "drang nach Osten" is only an indicator of the "creative nature of the social forces of the German people" in the past and confirmation that "these forces continue to live in it." In the past, he called the seizure of land in the East "a great socio-political success", the hero of which was "not individuals, but the entire German people, united together" {516} Future aggression against the Soviet Union was presented at this meeting in the false guise of a "people's war".

Based on the instructions of the Hitlerite leadership, all propaganda organizations in Germany focused their attention on the indoctrination of young people, seeing in them a reserve of the Wehrmacht. They have turned the education system into a tool for instilling hatred for other peoples, contempt, and monstrous cruelty towards them. Hitler's leaders boasted that they make wild beasts out of young people. At the Nazi Party Congress in 1935, Hitler declared that the German youth must become "fast as a greyhound, strong as tanned skin, and hardened as Krupp steel" {517} The Fuhrrer determined the main stages of fascist "education" that every German in the "Third Reich" must go through: the boy joins the "Jungvolk" organization, from where he goes to the "Hitler Youth". Then the young man goes to the SA, CC, or other Nazi paramilitary organizations, serves a compulsory labor service, after which he is drafted into the Wehrmacht. From the army or navy, the young man returns again to the SA, CC, and other Nazi organizations. The circle

closes {518} All these links of spiritual corruption prepared the youth for the role of cannon fodder for the future war.

The army of Nazi Germany absorbed the spirit of racism and revanchism. The entire system of education prepared the ground for those unheard-of atrocities that Hitler's Germany committed during the Second World War.

In close connection with the ideological preparations for the war was the military-theoretical activity of the German militarists. The president of the German Society for Military Policy and Military Science, General Kochenhausen, wrote: "It goes without saying that research and further development of military-theoretical and military-scientific questions should be carried out within the framework of the National Socialist worldview" {519}

In the works of reactionary military theorists from the period of the Weimar Republic, elements of fascist ideology were manifested: national chauvinism, racism, geopolitics, an apology for dictatorial power, glorification of brute force and war. Almost all German military theorists were supporters of the fascist regime and its ideology, and placed themselves entirely at the service of an aggressive policy. In many of their studies [151] , the idea was carried out that only fascism could solve any military-political problems of Germany. They put forward the slogan of a "strong personality" capable of suppressing the working-class movement within the country by means of a terrorist dictatorship and securing a rear for themselves in a future war. For example, General E. Buchfink wrote back in 1930 that a military dictator must calmly endure the sight of blood {520}. The author gazed with admiration at Mussolini's Italy as "the only state guided by the will of a truly great man, which does not bow before anyone and puts forward its demand for participation in power with increasing force" {521} , that is, the imperialist demand for the redistribution of the world and the establishment of dominance in the Mediterranean.

Such military theorists ideologically prepared the rise of the Nazis to power, and during the period of the "third empire" they competed with each other in attempts to "scientifically" prove that the fascist

regime - and only it - fully corresponded to the nature and requirements of the era. Thus, the author of numerous articles on total war, E. Walter, wrote in a military-theoretical journal: "The twentieth century will be called by the coming historian a century of war ... If earlier the world wanted to give war its own order, squeeze it into legal norms, force it to comply with its laws and values, now, on the contrary, he must obey the demands of the war, which has become the unspoken mistress of the century and has pushed the world to a position of truce. This emancipation of war, which is the most important event and feature of the era, requires the final stage: the abolition of the social order, based on the prerequisites of peace, and replacing it with one that meets the requirements of war. The creation of such a social constitution for war is the specific task of the present time..."{522}

The military theorists of fascist Germany considered war as an inevitable and vital phenomenon, explaining it in accordance with reactionary philosophical views. Using traditional religious-mystical, ethical, and psychological arguments, they focused on racial-biological, social-Darwinian, and geopolitical "explanations" of the war. Common to all theories was the denial of the historical conditionality and class essence of war and the desire to present it as a natural phenomenon, absolutely inescapable from the life of human society. The author of a book on chemical warfare, H. Büscher, wrote: "It is not proclamations and speeches, not treaties and alliances that decide about death and life, about war and peace, but the laws of origin and destruction, which are not subject to human will ... Just as we are not we can avoid death we cannot avoid war either. Life is fraught with the germ of death. This is the fate of all living things... War is fate."{523} .

Most of the military theorists of the "third empire" sang the war as a struggle for the survival of the nation, as an expression of the ability of a race or people to develop, the right of the strong to destroy the weak. "War is the highest manifestation of human abilities," wrote General Seeckt. "It is the natural and highest stage of development in the history of mankind" {524} . Fascist military theorists tried to present the preparations for war to achieve world domination as a

struggle for the existence of the German people, for the fate of each individual German. [152]

In the struggle, they assured, the victory would be for the Germans as the most powerful, viable race. Furch, one of the prominent theorists of fascist Germany, wrote: "All life is a struggle ... The strong must win, live, and develop, the weak ... be defeated, die and not be reborn" {525} .

The fascist-militarist philosophy of war formed the basis of the views of the Nazi leaders and the command of the Reichswehr on the nature of the future war, the methods of its preparation and conduct, and the principles of military organizational development. The theory of total war, developed by German military theorists back in the 1920s as a generalization of the experience of the First World War, served as the core of military doctrine. The military expert of the Nazi Party, K. Hirl, outlined its main provisions in his speech at the National Socialist Party Congress in 1929. In fact, it was a "program statement" of the party on military policy {526}. In the first half of the 1930s, especially after the fascist coup, the development of the problems of preparing and conducting war accelerated. Most German military theorists characterized the future war as total. A kind of generalization and the most characteristic expression of their views on this issue was General Ludendorff's book "Total War", published in 1935.

Under the "total" fascist theorists understood a comprehensive war, in which all means and methods are allowed to defeat and destroy the enemy. They demanded the early and complete mobilization of the economic, moral, and military resources of the state. The policy of the state must be entirely subordinated to the solution of this problem. Based on this, Ludendorff demanded "to throw overboard all the theories of Clausewitz" and especially his position on the relationship between war and politics. He argued that in the modern era the essence of both war and politics has changed, that the war undertaken by the monopolists allegedly meets the interests of the people. "War and politics serve the survival of the people, but war is the highest expression of the people's will to live. Therefore, politics should serve the conduct of the war" {527} .

The focus of fascist military theorists was the problem of preparing the country's population for active participation in the war. Ludendorff wrote: "The center of gravity of total war is in the people." His "spiritual cohesion is ultimately decisive for the outcome of this war..." {528} . The main condition for creating the "moral" spirit of the population and the army, theorists considered the strengthening of the fascist-type military dictatorship, and the main methods were terror against democratic and anti-war forces, the widespread use of national and social demagoguery.

They attached no less importance to the advance and comprehensive preparation of the German economy for war. Ludendorff urged the fascist leadership to draw lessons from the experience of the past, foresee in advance the greatly increased needs for the material support of the war and, given the likelihood of the opponents establishing a naval blockade, to ensure the maximum self-supply of the country with military materials and food {529} .

An essential feature of the future war was its destructive nature, that is, the struggle not only against the armed forces of the enemy, but also against his people. "Total war is merciless," wrote Ludendorff. The Fascist military magazine proclaimed: "The war of the future [153] is total not only in the exertion of all forces, but also in its consequences; in other words: according to the internal logic of total war, the same victory corresponds to it. Total victory means the complete annihilation of the defeated people, their complete and final disappearance from the stage of history" {530} .

The theoretical concoctions of the fascist German militarists emphasized the advantages of rejecting the norms of international law and the customs of warfare. "The more vigorously one of the parties uses the combat means of the new time," said Buchfink, "the more shamelessly it crosses all the boundaries of traditional ideas about military and international law, the stronger its superiority manifests itself" {531}. The Fuhrer spoke frankly with one of his close associates, Rauschnig: "Air raids, unheard of in their massiveness, sabotage, terror, acts of sabotage, assassination attempts, assassinations of leading persons, crushing attacks on all weak points of the enemy defense suddenly, at the same second .. I

will stop at nothing. No so-called international law will prevent me from taking advantage of the advantage afforded me. The next war will be unheard of cruel and bloody . Thus, the barbaric methods of warfare, which were soon put into practice, were substantiated, and justified.

German military theorists, as a rule, realized that a protracted war could end in disaster for the ruling class of Germany. Therefore, they believed that "the leadership of a total war will proceed from the fact that as soon as possible to end it and thus not jeopardize the outcome of the war due to the violation of the cohesion of the people and the emergence of economic difficulties that will not be slow to affect the people and the conduct of the war, if it drag on" {533}. This circumstance forced the German militarists to pay great attention to the development of the strategic concept of "blitzkrieg", the idea of which was put forward by Schlieffen in his time. Analyzing the experience of the First World War, they unanimously came to the conclusion that the failure of the Schlieffen plan was due not to its viciousness, but to the mistakes of the German command, primarily Moltke Jr. The German fascist theoreticians, the general staff and command of the Wehrmacht persistently searched for ways to implement the ideas of fleet operations and campaigns based on the use of the latest means of armed struggle. In this they saw the only way to overcome the obvious discrepancy between their far-reaching conquest plans and the economic and military potentials of Germany.

In 1933-1935 many problems of the "lightning war" have not yet been resolved, and controversy has unfolded around them. A rather influential group of generals and officers of the fascist German army, whose views differed little from the operational-strategic concepts of the First World War, preferred the traditional branches of the military: infantry, artillery, and cavalry. They showed caution and even some skepticism in assessing new equipment, in particular the possibility of independent operational use of tanks and mechanized troops. This group doubted that positional forms of armed struggle could be avoided in the future. Criticizing such views, the military weekly wrote: "The vast majority of generals love trench warfare

and siege; there they have time to think, absent [154]surprises, there is no need to make quick decisions" {534} .

Another group of military theorists and practitioners was inclined to overestimate the role of the latest means of combat, believing that sudden and massive strikes by tank and motorized troops in cooperation with aviation would ensure Germany's victory in lightning campaigns and the war as a whole. So, Guderian, savoring, described the picture of the blitzkrieg: "One of the nights, the doors of aircraft hangars and army fleets will open, engines will howl and units will rush forward. The first surprise air strike will destroy and capture important industrial and raw material areas, which will turn them off from military production. The government and military centers of the enemy will be paralyzed, and its transport system will be disrupted. In the very first sudden strategic offensive, the troops will penetrate more or less far into the depths of enemy territory ...{535} .

The concept of "blitzkrieg" fully corresponded to the adventurist aspirations of the fascist leaders and enjoyed their unconditional support. From it, as well as from the more general doctrine of total war, the German militarists proceeded in the development of the armed forces. With the advent of the Nazis to power, a course was immediately taken to create a massive, multi-million, highly mechanized army. The theory of small professional armies, which had not previously enjoyed success among the German militarists, was decisively rejected. On May 9, 1935, the Berliner Börsenzeitung wrote: "The false path that led to faith in small, well-equipped armies based on long-term service is over. As in the first world war, in a new war one will have to reckon with the armed force of the nation, that is, with armies of many millions."

The rapid deployment of the 100,000th Reichswehr into a mass army became possible because this army was created back in the years of the Weimar Republic. Even then, cadres of officers and non-commissioned officers were trained, weapons were developed and their production was launched. This, although with reservations, bourgeois historians are forced to admit. "During the seizure of power," writes the Nazi military theorist General W. Erfurt, "Hitler

found part of his military plans already implemented as a result of the activities of the General Staff of the Ground Forces" {536} .

However, the rate of growth of the armed forces in the very first years of the fascist domination far exceeded the previous intentions of the generals of the Reichswehr. According to plan "A", developed by the Reichswehr command in 1932, it was planned to complete preparations for the deployment of 21 infantry divisions by March 31, 1938. This task was completed by October 1934.

The decisive step towards the deployment of the armed forces for the implementation of aggressive actions was taken on March 16, 1935, when the law on the creation of the Wehrmacht was passed in Germany and universal military service was introduced. The land army in peacetime was defined as 36 divisions, combined into 12 army corps. The armed forces, [155] officially called "Wehrmacht", were divided into three types: the land army, the navy, and the air force, which had their own main commands. The Ministry of the Reichswehr was transformed into the Imperial War Ministry. On behalf of the Fuhrer and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the Minister of War, General Blomberg {537} , carried out the coordination and practical leadership of all branches of the armed forces .

In connection with the introduction of universal military service, the Hitlerite government officially declared that it did not consider itself bound by the restrictions on armaments imposed by the Treaty of Versailles {538} . The Western powers that signed the treaty reacted to this only with formal notes of protest. This behavior of England, France, and Italy, wrote the French ambassador in Berlin, A. François-Poncet, convinced Hitler that "he can afford everything and even prescribe his laws to Europe" {539} .

On May 21, 1935, a law was passed that determined the draft contingent, terms of service in the Wehrmacht, duties, and rights of military personnel {540} . Initially establishing a one-year term of active service in the army, the Nazis sought to prepare cadres for an aggressive war in a short time. However, at the insistence of the high command of the land army, pointing to the negative consequences of

the accelerated training of soldiers, from August 24, 1936, the term of active service was increased to two years {541} . On March 16, 1935, the German government announced that it was bringing the number of divisions to 36. However, this limit was soon surpassed {542} . The following table testifies to the growth of the ground forces of Nazi Germany.

In 1935, 11 corps and 3 district military commands were created. The number of ground forces reached 300 thousand, that is, three times the number of personnel determined by the Treaty of Versailles. Taking into account the naval and air fleets and all auxiliary troops, the personnel reached 900 thousand [156]

The basis for the formation of a mass army was not only the Reichswehr, but also the police, a significant part of which was in the barracks. Organized on an army basis, it underwent regular combat training. About 2500 officers for the Wehrmacht {544} were taken from the police . The Wehrmacht was replenished at the expense of personnel from various paramilitary organizations that adjoined the Nazi Party: the SA, the Hitler Youth, the National Socialist Automobile and Aviation Corps, and sports societies.

An important task of the Hitler Youth, numbering up to 8 million youths {545} by the beginning of the war, was the military training of young people and their education in a militaristic-fascist spirit. Built on a military model, this organization had its own units and subdivisions, its members wore uniforms, had ranks and ranks, and were trained in shooting under the guidance of instructor officers. One of the leaders of the Hitler Youth said: "In the course of time, we want to ensure that German schoolchildren handle weapons as confidently as they do with a pen."

In addition to performing security and police functions, the SA detachments were engaged in military training of pre-conscripts and demobilized. Although in terms of armament and combat training, the assault detachments were undoubtedly significantly inferior to the Reichswehr and were not formally subordinate to his command, nevertheless they received instructions from him on the military

training of their members. Before joining the Wehrmacht, young people had to undergo military training in the SA units or other paramilitary organizations.

As part of the SA, special formations were created, intended for military operations east of Germany. They were equipped and trained as regular troops. By the beginning of 1936, there were 34 such formations, each of which was close to an infantry division in size, and in general they numbered up to 320 thousand people {546}

The training of personnel for tank and motorized troops was carried out by the Nazi automobile corps, which included up to 400 thousand motorists and had a powerful technical training base: 26 driving schools, 23 separate motorcycle groups. It had about 150,000 motor vehicles and motorcycles at its disposal. {547} The activities of this organization contributed to the rapid deployment of fascist tank troops, turning them into the main striking force of the land army. Within two years, the Nazis managed to create three tank divisions armed with the latest T-I and T-II tanks for that time. One of the divisions was commanded by Guderian.

Aviation developed even more rapidly. In March 1935, Goering boastfully declared: "I intend to create an air force that, when the hour strikes, will fall upon the enemy like a punishing right hand of retribution. The enemy must consider himself defeated even before he begins to fight. {548} The Air Force was created in such a way as not only to interact with other branches of the armed forces, primarily with the land army, but also independently conduct an air war. The focus was on [157]on offensive forces - bomber aircraft. At the end of 1933, the Hitlerite government decided by October 1, 1935, to increase the air force fleet to 1,610 combat aircraft, of which almost 50 percent were bombers, 30 reconnaissance aircraft, 12 fighters, and 6 percent naval aircraft {549} . This program was completed ahead of schedule thanks to the powerful aviation industry created in advance.

Air Force personnel were trained in civil aviation flight schools and numerous sports unions. By 1933, the Sportflug Society and its affiliates alone had trained 3,200 pilots and 17,000 glider pilots {550} .

The Ministry of Aviation, headed by Goering, supervised all activities for the preparation and creation of a powerful air force. Sports societies and clubs were merged into the "German Sports Aviation Association", the basis of which was the Nazi aviation corps.

In July 1934, the program for the construction of the Air Force was adopted, which provided for the creation of an air force consisting of 4021 aircraft (half of them were training). Aviation enterprises were supposed to supply in addition to the already existing 894 bombers, 245 fighters, 662 reconnaissance aircraft, 153 naval aircraft {551} . This program has also been implemented.

The development of military aviation has assumed such a wide scale that it has become impossible to hide this fact. March 10, 1935, Goering officially announced the decision of the German government to create an air force. By that time, Germany had 2,500 aircraft, of which 800 were combat {552} . 20 combat squadrons were formed, including 4 fighter, 7 bomber, 5 reconnaissance; There were 20 squadrons at flying schools {553} .

For the development of the navy, the Nazis received from the Weimar Republic an even more solid base than for the air force. Since 1933, the Nazis have significantly expanded the program and accelerated the pace of naval construction. The budget appropriations for the fleet grew rapidly. In addition to the planned appropriations for 1933 in the amount of 186 million marks, another 115.7 million marks were allocated in February-April of this year. In 1934, appropriations amounted to 487 million marks, and in 1935 - 650 million marks {554} . The personnel of the Navy has more than doubled over the years and in 1935 amounted to 34 thousand sailors and officers {555}. In 1934 they were lowered; from the stocks to the water and in 1935 the second battleship ("pocket" battleship) "Admiral Scheer" with a displacement of 12.1 thousand tons, the cruiser "Nuremberg" (6980 tons) were put into operation. In addition, at that time there were 3 battleships on the stocks (two of them were large - 31.8 thousand gross tons each), a heavy cruiser, destroyers, and other ships {556} .

The Anglo-German agreement concluded on June 18, 1935, served as a new impetus to the intensification of the naval arms race . to create a submarine fleet equal to the English {557} Since the total tonnage of the ships of the English navy at that time was 1,200 thousand tons, Germany was able to create a fleet of 420 thousand tons. In fact, the total tonnage of its fleet was 112.2 thousand tons, and minus the completely obsolete battleships - 78 thousand tons. Consequently, Nazi Germany could increase its fleet by 5.5 times {558}

For the Nazis, this agreement was of great military and political significance. It actually legalized the rearmament of the fascist Reich and encouraged its leaders to further violations of international legal obligations and, naturally, caused rejoicing in the camp of the Nazis. At the Nuremberg trials, Ribbentrop said: "Hitler and I were very pleased with this treaty, Hitler was as happy as ever" {559}

After the conclusion of the naval agreement, the feverish construction of a large German navy began. 12 submarines, the secret construction of which began a long time ago, were immediately put into operation. In addition to those already laid on the slipways, the construction of two battleships with a displacement of 41.7 thousand tons and 42.9 thousand tons, a number of heavy cruisers, destroyers, 24 submarines {560}.

On May 21, 1935, the fascist government adopted the law "On the Defense of the Empire", which was kept secret until the beginning of the Second World War. It defined the duties of the military and civil authorities in the preparation, initiation and conduct of war. The law gave Hitler the right to take sole decisions on the introduction of martial law in the country, general mobilization, and declaration of war {561} At the Nuremberg trials, the defense law was qualified as the cornerstone of the entire preparation of Nazi Germany for war.

In an effort to turn the armed forces into an obedient instrument of their policy, the Nazis paid special attention to their fascistization. Generals and admirals most devoted to fascism were appointed to leading positions in the War Ministry and the main commands of the branches of the armed forces: Blomberg, Reichenau, Raeder, Fritsch, Keitel, Jodl.

On August 2, 1934, immediately after the death of the aged President Hindenburg, Hitler was declared supreme commander of the armed forces, and on the same day the troops were sworn in. In particular, it said: "I swear before the Lord God this sacred oath to unconditionally obey the Führer of the German Empire and people - Adolf Hitler, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces ..." {562} If the oath of the Weimar Republic demanded service to the German state and loyalty to its constitution, then this one is loyalty and unconditional obedience to Hitler. She played an important role in turning the German armed forces into a submissive will of the Nazis as a means of carrying out their aggressive plans.

At the same time, one cannot agree with the assertion of former Hitlerite generals and officers that this oath, and only this oath, forced them to faithfully serve the Führer, to commit crimes against the peoples [159] who became victims of fascist aggression. They became conquerors and enslavers in addition to their oath obligations to Hitler. It is also indicative that the oath was prepared by the generals, who then ensured that the entire personnel of the Reichswehr was brought to it. By order of Blomberg, the text of the oath was compiled by his closest assistant, General Reichenau {563}. None of the German generals and officers refused to swear allegiance to the Führer {564}. In accordance with the spirit of the fascist state and its aggressive policy, the Nazis changed the wording of "the duties of a German soldier." If earlier it was said that the Reichswehr serves the state, and not the parties (which was by no means true), the new text read: "The Wehrmacht is the bearer of the armed forces of the German people. He defends the German Empire and the fatherland, the people united by National Socialism and its living space" {565}. The inclusion in the document of the fascist slogan "living space" determined the service mission of the Wehrmacht as an instrument of the predatory policy of German imperialism.

The fascization of the Reichswehr and its successor, the Wehrmacht, was also expressed in the imposition of external forms of Nazism - emblems, greetings (out of order), various rituals. The Nazis attached particular importance to the indoctrination of

personnel in the spirit of fascist militarism. Propaganda of anti-communism, racism, national chauvinism, glorification of brute force and war formed its basis.

In words, the Nazis claimed that their army was outside politics and that "party propaganda" was not allowed in it {566} . In fact, this meant only a ban on any propaganda in the armed forces, except for fascist propaganda. Numerous documents published in the post-war period testify to the fact that the leadership of the Reichswehr and the Wehrmacht showed constant concern for the strengthening of fascist propaganda among the personnel of the armed forces. Thus, in a directive dated November 21, 1933, the Minister of War demanded that the press, radio, and other means of propaganda direct their efforts to saturate the Wehrmacht with National Socialist ideas and fight the Wehrmacht against communism {567}. Blomberg's directive of April 4, 1934, on the introduction of the National Socialist ideology into the Wehrmacht noted: "The first year of the National Socialist state laid the foundation for the political and economic rebirth of the nation. The second year puts at the forefront the saturation of the nation with the guiding ideas of the National Socialist state ... This fully applies to the Wehrmacht ... Therefore, I demand that in the future, studies on current politics in the Wehrmacht be given even greater importance and increased attention" {568} . The leadership of the Wehrmacht obliged all officers to study the National Socialist doctrine and organized special classes for them {569} .

At the same time, the Nazi leadership demanded from all party authorities close ties with the Wehrmacht, cooperation with its command, [160]including in matters of education of personnel. In this regard, the directive letter of the Deputy Fuhrer Hess dated May 13, 1935, is characteristic. It emphasized that the unity of the Nazi Party and the Wehrmacht is a decisive factor on which the fate of the German nation depends. "While the National Socialist German Workers' Party is the sole bearer of the political will of the German people," wrote Hess, "the army is the only bearer of weapons... marching separately, they work together to build the foundations of a soldierly National Socialist Germany... I expect from all party

authorities that they will always and everywhere ensure the fulfillment of the tasks and needs of the Wehrmacht, support their official bodies in all respects and closely cooperate with them ... I expect from all leaders, but especially from the holders of the highest power, what they will do ,{570} .

The culminating point of the feverish activity of the Nazis to turn Germany into a state of war in 1933-1935. was the seventh congress of the National Socialist Party, held in September 1935. The congress was called the "party congress of freedom", and 1935 - "the year of freedom." The Nazis announced that now at last the Germans had gained the long-awaited "freedom" - military sovereignty, the freedom to arm. The congress was held as an open demonstration of the rapidly growing military power of the fascist state and as a grandiose propaganda action intended for the ideological and psychological indoctrination of the German population in the interests of preparing for war.

It is characteristic that the anti-democratic, ultra-reactionary and militaristic essence of the Hitlerite party found its expression not only in speeches at this congress (as well as at others), but also in the specific form in which it was held. There was no reporting report, no discussion of it, and there were no elections of the leading body of the party. All this was considered incompatible with the "principle of the Fuhrer". Instead of a report, Hitler's appeal was read out. The speeches of almost all speakers, especially the main ideologists of fascism Rosenberg and Goebbels, were devoted to the "justification" of anti-communism, racism, and militarism.

The main events of the congress were held not so much in the meeting room, but on a huge specially equipped square on the outskirts of Nuremberg, where the Nazi elite held a review of mass paramilitary organizations: SA, SS, Nazi automobile, and aviation corps, the "workers' front", detachments serving labor service, the Hitler Youth, and the National Socialist Women's Organization. Each day was dedicated to one of these organizations. The imperial head of each of them reported in a military manner to Hitler, who then spoke to the lined up columns with a speech. After each rally, a parade was held. During the congress, more than 300 thousand

functionaries of the Nazi Party, members of the SA and SS, representatives of labor service organizations, young Nazis from the Hitler Youth in uniform passed in front of the podium, where the rulers of the "third empire" were located. The sixth and final day of the congress was dedicated to the Wehrmacht. On this day, in addition to speeches and the parade march of thousands of columns of troops, demonstrative exercises of motorized infantry, armored troops, artillery, aviation with live firing and bombing were held. All this was supposed to stun viewers and listeners of the radio, instill faith in the power and invincibility of German weapons, the possibility of implementing the plans of conquest outlined in the bible of fascism - *Mein Kampf*. [161]

The militarist-fascist Goebbels propaganda during the days of the "work" of the congress was aimed not so much at the mind as at the feelings of the Germans. The grandiose multi-day spectacle played out in Nuremberg, the numerous speeches of Hitler and other Nazi leaders deftly adapted to the psychology of the German layman and aroused in him the basest chauvinistic, revanchist, aggressive feelings, and thoughts.

Using an extensive apparatus of terror - the Gestapo, the SS, military counterintelligence, the Nazis prevented the penetration of democratic and anti-war sentiments into the environment of soldiers and officers, expressions of dissatisfaction with the fascist order. No one protested twice, because for any oppositional judgment, every German faced a concentration camp or the death penalty. Fascist propaganda was given a complete monopoly. Complementing terror and interacting with it, it essentially controlled the behavior and even the thoughts and feelings of everyone, and especially the soldiers of the Wehrmacht. The Nazis sought to educate a "fighter" who blindly obeys the will of the Fuhrer and is ready to unquestioningly carry out any order of the fascist command. Already the first years of the Nazi regime showed what a huge danger for the neighboring peoples and the German nation itself is the spiritual corruption of youth,

Thus, the fascist coup in Germany was a turning point in the practical preparation for war in the entire policy of German

imperialism, in the development of its military-economic, moral-psychological, and military potentials. It led to the emergence in the center of Europe of the most dangerous hotbed of war. The spirit of militarism permeated the entire public life of the Third Reich.

The progressive forces, and above all the Soviet Union, the communists of the whole world closely followed the development of events in Germany and mobilized the masses for the struggle against fascism. The communists gave a deep socio-political assessment of the processes that took place in 1933-1935. in this country. "Things are obviously heading for a new war," {571} , was pointed out in January 1934 in the Report to the 17th Party Congress on the work of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

Some bourgeois figures also warned about the transformation of fascist Germany into a state of war. For example, US Ambassador Dodd reported to his government on April 5, 1935: "Great barracks have been erected throughout Germany, surrounded by large training grounds, and numerous airfields on which large bombers are trained day and night ... From these facts you can conclude that the war is here the immediate and main goal» {572} .

The former officer of the German General Staff S. Erkner vividly described the situation in Germany shortly after the Nazis came to power: "The way of life of the army acts as a general social form of existence of a society whose forces are fully mobilized to prepare for war. Everything is completely subordinate to the army. Barracks and war create the atmosphere of every day. The constitution has undergone significant changes. All state activity in peacetime is limited to military frameworks. The state has ceased to engage in conventional [162]problems of peaceful life. In front of everyone's eyes, it turned into a military state - that is, one whose primary function was to prepare for war ... Military criteria and the military hierarchy became inseparable from the whole life of society. In Hitlerite Germany, everything, absolutely everything - people and things - exists from now on only being dependent on the war, that is, in relation to wartime conditions .

Having created a rather impressive military force by 1935, the Nazis began to move on to specific aggressive actions, trying to test their army and create the prerequisites for seizures. The first such action was the operation codenamed "Schulung", which provided for the entry of the Wehrmacht into the demilitarized Rhineland. The directive on the preparation of this operation was issued by Minister of War Blomberg on May 2, 1935. The date of the operation was made dependent on the foreign policy situation. On March 7, 1936, such a moment arrived.

In the autumn of 1935, the Wehrmacht command developed the first detailed plan for the war against France, codenamed "Rot". At the same time, plans were drawn up for the invasion of Austria ("Otto") and Czechoslovakia ("Grun") {574} .

The fascist German General Staff began to work in full force, planning fire and death for neighboring countries. A terrible threat of a German fascist invasion, enslavement and even physical destruction of its peoples hung over Europe. Never before has humanity faced such a threat. It would seem that all countries, all political parties should have united in order to jointly erect a protective barrier in the way of German aggression, but this did not happen - on the contrary, England, the USA and France, instead of counteracting, increasingly encouraged the aggressive plans of Nazi Germany.

The policy of encouraging fascism

1. Support for German militarism by the ruling circles of England

The main political force in England, most consistently pursuing a policy of turning Germany into an anti-Soviet springboard of international imperialism, was the Conservative Party, primarily its extremely reactionary wing, the so-called "Diehardites" - "hardheaded". V. I. Lenin in his work "Arms and Capitalism" classified the British conservatives among those bourgeois politicians "who constitute a close international gang that incites peoples to compete in the matter of armaments ..." {575} . Subsequent events fully confirmed the profound historical validity of Lenin's assessment.

The British monopolies, grown fat in the war, sought to maintain their international positions and establish British world domination. However, the economic situation of Great Britain did not correspond to these grandiose plans.

The first post-war years were characterized by a deepening crisis in the British economy. In the second half of 1920, an economic crisis began in England. The index of industrial production, which was 90.5 in 1920 (100 in 1913), fell in 1921 to 61.5 per cent. During the years of temporary stabilization of capitalism, the British economy did not take any significant step forward. It was seriously undermined by payments on American loans, which during the First World War amounted to a huge amount - 850 million pounds sterling.

In 1929, England, whose industrial production had barely reached the pre-war level, was gripped by the global economic crisis. The volume of industrial output in 1932 decreased by 17.8 percent. The old industries were especially affected by the crisis. Thus, iron smelting fell from 7.59 million tons in 1929 to 3.57 million tons in 1932. The index of profits of joint-stock companies decreased by almost 25 percent compared to 1924.

The deepening of the crisis in the British economy had a direct connection with the policy of reviving the German industrial and military potentials pursued by the ruling circles. The British monopolies strove to create in Germany a profitable sphere for the investment of capital and a sales market. At the same time, the British bourgeoisie hoped to use German financial and industrial capital [164] as a competitive economic counterbalance to French capital, its main rival in Europe.

Some Western scholars state that "England tried to soften the Franco-German differences" {576} . An analysis of events refutes this thesis.

E. Thalmann is profoundly right when he wrote that according to the concept worked out by the English ruling circles, "contradictions between individual states, and primarily between France and Germany, should be used in the interests of England's world policy" {577} .

The British working people fought against ever-increasing poverty, unemployment, and lack of rights, against the new pressure of reactionary forces, came out in support of Soviet Russia and the national liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies of the British Empire, which was especially active in India, Egypt, and Iraq.

In 1919, the first major uprising of the English working class after the war took place - a general strike of industrial workers in Clyde (Scotland). In Glasgow, it turned into a violent clash between the strikers and the police. The railroad workers declared a general strike. The government's attempt to use troops against the strikers ended in failure: the soldiers fraternized with the workers, so the military units had to be returned to the barracks. The influence of the trade union and labor movements increased.

The greatest achievement of the British working class during the upsurge of the class struggle was the creation in 1920 of the Communist Party of Great Britain, the vanguard of the British working people.

The experienced British bourgeoisie, taking advantage of the opportunism of the Labor leaders, which is characteristic of the labor movement in England, went over to the counteroffensive. Repressions against the strikers intensified. In the country, one after another, emergency anti-worker laws were adopted. However, the working people of England put up a powerful rebuff to the reaction, which was forced to manoeuvre. Evidence of this is the formation in 1924 of the first Labor government and its subsequent recognition of the Soviet Union.

The strike movement continued to grow and assumed an ever more massive character. In 1926, England was shaken by the first general strike in its history. In 1931, sailors rebelled on several ships of the British Navy, located in the harbor of Invergordon (Northern Scotland).

The economic situation of the working people of England was difficult. By 1932, the number of unemployed reached 3.5 million {578} . The cost of living has increased by almost one and a half times compared with 1914. Part of the workers received wages below the

subsistence level. About 20 percent of the population could only provide themselves with a beggarly diet close to the diet established for prisoners in Scottish prisons {579} (in Scotland, the population subjected to national discrimination lived especially poorly). In subsequent years, the country was swept by a more powerful wave of the class struggle of the proletariat. A new form of this struggle was the famous "hunger campaigns" in protest against [165]economic policy of the government. In February 1934, at the call of the Communist Party, a congress of unity of action was held in London, which adopted a program of specific demands of the British workers and unemployed to the government. After the end of the congress, a grandiose demonstration of workers took place in Hyde Park, in which about 200 thousand people took part. The militant demonstration of the working people took place under the slogans of struggle against unemployment, hunger, fascism, and war.

The policy of remilitarization and support of fascism in Germany was also considered by the British ruling circles as an important factor for suppressing the anti-imperialist struggle of the working people of Europe, building a dam against Bolshevism, and creating more favorable conditions for crushing the labor movement inside the country. "Waves of class hatred," wrote the progressive English historian R. Arnot, "swept the supporters of British official principles ... The Bolsheviks were the most dangerous enemy for them" {580} .

The reactionary domestic and foreign policy of the British ruling circles contributed to the creation and vigorous activity of fascist organizations in England itself. English fascism did not have a broad mass base and was used by British monopoly circles as a reserve instrument for strengthening their power. At the same time, the fascist movement in the country was considered by the reactionary English bourgeoisie as one of the effective forms of support for international, especially German, fascism.

The forerunners of fascist organizations in England were various extremist groups that the ruling circles used to fight the labor movement. One of them was the "British Imperial Union", which acted under nationalist slogans and with a fascist program. The

prototype of the fascist assault detachments were the "special" units of the "black and piebald" and "auxiliary detachments" that participated in the 20s in the suppression of the national liberation struggle of the Irish people. As a rule, criminals or former officers were recruited into these units. In 1923, in circles close to the leader of the right wing of the conservative party, the Duke of Northumberland, the British Fascists organization was created, the activities of which were officially allowed by the government. Its program set itself the task of "preventing the spread of communism and Bolshevism." In August 1924, the organization numbered more than 100 thousand people who united in small groups headed by commanders. Their duty was to "take energetic measures against the revolutionary elements in their area". This organization, like many others like it, was led by representatives of the military, parliamentarians, and businessmen of England. In 1924, Brigadier General Blakeney became chairman of the British Fascists. The organization was most active during the general strike in 1926. In 1924, Brigadier General Blakeney became chairman of the British Fascists. The organization was most active during the general strike in 1926. In 1924, Brigadier General Blakeney became chairman of the British Fascists. The organization was most active during the general strike in 1926.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, other fascist and pro-fascist organizations also appeared in England. In 1928, the "Imperial Fascist League" was created, which published the newspaper "Fashist", the "National Socialist League", the organization "Green Shirts" and some others. The main backbone of the "British Fascists" and various fascist groups merged into the "British Union of Fascists" created in 1932, the largest fascist organization in England in the 30s. The head of the union, the British "Führer" millionaire O. Mosley, was a member of the executive committee of the Labor Party and was a member of the Macdonald government. In May 1930, he left the government and tried to exploit the discontent [166]rank-and-file members of the Labor Party to seize leadership and make a career for themselves. When these attempts failed, Mosley announced the creation of a new party, which then became the British Union of Fascists. Imitating Hitler, Mosley outlined his

program in the book "Great England", published in 1932. Mosley's domestic political program was reduced to the subordination of the working class to the dictatorship of the "corporate state". It contained social demagoguery, designed for various segments of the population: he promised work to the unemployed, small entrepreneurs - protection from the "workers-Bolsheviks", capitalists - new profits. Mosley advanced the chauvinist slogan "England First" and vowed to achieve British world domination.

Mosley's program attracted into the ranks of the fascists mainly representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, disillusioned with their position, as well as various declassed elements and the military. In the first two years of its existence, the party grew quite quickly, although the number of its members was kept secret. But it is known that by the beginning of 1934 there were at least 400 active branches of the "British Union of Fascists" in England, with an average of 50 people [581] .

Following the example of the Nazis, Mosley introduced a special party uniform (black shirt) for members of his union and formed the so-called "defensive forces" with the corresponding headquarters. English fascists held rallies in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, and other major cities in England. Often they ended with the beating of those who opposed the fascist youths. The British police in these cases, as a rule, took the side of the Blackshirts.

In the 1930s, in addition to the British Union of Fascists, new ultra-right organizations appeared in England. A prominent place among them was occupied by the Imperial Politics group, created by parliamentarians headed by R. Banks. Its members were ardent supporters of the policy of appeasement of the aggressors and vicious enemies of the Soviet Union. The Group published a monthly review of international relations that slandered the USSR and lauded the fascist regimes in Germany and Italy.

In the autumn of 1935, the "Society of the Anglo-German Commonwealth" was created in England. It included representatives of British financial capital (among them the heads of the largest banks) and a number of prominent figures of the Conservative

Party. The society carried out propaganda for the rapprochement between England and Nazi Germany. One of its leaders, Lord Londonderry, declared that the society considers it its task to facilitate the conclusion of a pact between England, France, Italy, and Germany, that is, to achieve what was subsequently carried out by the conservatives led by Chamberlain in Munich.

The British ruling circles, and especially the Conservative Party, took a patronizing attitude towards British fascism. "Scratch a conservative and you will find a fascist" {582} - these words of Lloyd George have never lost their relevance. Fascist organizations were created with the money of big British capitalists and enjoyed their support. In particular, the "British Union of Fascists" was mainly financed by the newspaper magnate Lord Rothermere; The union received material assistance and all-round support from Germany and Italy. [167]

The working class of England gave a resolute rebuff to the fascist attacks. On September 9, 1934, when about 2,500 Mosley supporters gathered in Hyde Park, the workers of London organized a counter-demonstration, in which up to 150,000 people took part. The fascist rally was disrupted. Characteristically, the action of the working people of London took place despite the efforts of the reactionary Labor and trade union leaders, who sabotaged the anti-fascist struggle of the working class. The General Council of the British Trade Unions prevented union members from participating in a counter-demonstration against Mosley, but the force of labor unity thwarted this action by the opportunist leaders of the British labor movement {583} .

The British bourgeoisie showed in every way its disposition towards Italian and then German fascism. In 1923, the English king, for the services rendered to the counter-revolution, granted Mussolini one of the highest awards in England - the Order of the Bath. In 1928, the head of the largest English monopoly, Imperial Chemical Industries, A. Mond, while in Rome, assured the Duce's supporters: "I admire fascism, because it ensures social peace." Churchill said at a press conference in Rome that he was "fascinated by Mussolini" {584} . This statement provoked enthusiastic responses in the Italian press,

which especially praised Churchill for having "recognized the true spirit of the fascist movement" {585} .

British reaction in every possible way supported the growing fascist movement in Germany and contributed to Hitler's rise to power. The English magnates Deterding and Rothermere, who had been financing German fascism for many years, showed particular zeal. In the autumn of 1930, Rothermere left for Germany, where he met with Hitler. Then he published an article in German and English newspapers in which he advocated the coming of the Nazis to power. "The transfer of political influence in Germany to the National Socialists is also beneficial for the rest of Europe," Rothermere wrote, "because in this way another bulwark against Bolshevism is being erected ..." The scope of the hysterical campaign of the English reactionary press in favor of Nazism caused a negative reaction even in the German bourgeois press.

Contacts between the British bourgeoisie and representatives of the Nazi leadership were intensified. At meetings, British leaders always found "Hitler's achievements remarkable." In 1932, Churchill was going to visit Hitler {586} . Rosenberg was invited to England, and then Ribbentrop. The meeting of the latter with the leader of the Conservatives Baldwin was organized at his dacha in 1933 by the chairman of the English Conservative Party, Lord Davidson, who testified that it "was a success" {587} .

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the process of providing direct assistance by England to the formation of the German military machine intensified. The conditions for this were created by all the previous activities of the British reactionary bourgeoisie: the active participation of England, together with the United States, in the Dawes and Young plans, the strengthening of ties between the British and German cartels, [168] the pro-German diplomatic activity of England, the most important act of which was the Locarno Pact, the secret and open support violations by the government of the Weimar Republic of the military restrictions established by the Treaty of Versailles.

The composition of the English government in the early 1930s, dominated by conservatives, fully corresponded to the goals of further intensifying the anti-Soviet, in fact, pro-fascist foreign policy. The list of its members resembled a list of representatives of the largest military concerns, firms, and banks. Prime Minister S. Baldwin was a co-owner of Baldwin Limited military factories. Minister of Finance N. Chamberlain held the director's chair of the military firm "Birmingham Small Arms Company". Foreign Minister Simon was a major shareholder in the chemical concern Imperial Chemical Industries. Secretary of War Hailsham, Secretary of the Interior Gilmour, and Minister of the Colonies Canleaf-Lister had close ties to the Vickers military-industrial concern.

Bourgeois historians and memoirists, especially from among the British Conservatives, are trying to justify this policy. The former Prime Minister of Great Britain, one of the prominent figures of the Conservative Party, G. Macmillan wrote in his memoirs: "The first actions of Hitlerism did not give cause for concern. Moreover, we knew Mussolini and fascist Italy, and the results seemed good... Naturally, it never occurred to anyone to read Mayi Kampf {588} .

But Macmillan has a short memory. The British reaction met the pogrom actions of the Nazis who came to power in a different way. In England, there were many obvious well-wishers of the fascist regime. In one of the documents of German diplomacy, such well-wishers are named: the royal court, the aristocracy, a significant part of the clergy, the military and other influential circles of England {589}

The Hitler regime was provided with extensive financial support for the City of London. The Bank of England began to play the role of an institution under the guarantee of which the most prominent British firms supplied Germany on credit with copper, aluminium, nickel, and other raw materials necessary for the war industry. At the end of 1934, the bank provided the German Reichsbank with a loan of 750 thousand pounds sterling. "The financiers believed," the Daily Worker wrote on December 6, 1934, "that this was the only possible means to suppress the growing discontent of the German workers and peasants ..."

In December 1934, after a meeting between the head of the British oil trust Royal Dutch Shell and Hitler, a deal was concluded between German industrialists and Anglo-American oil magnates: the latter provided Germany with oil products in the amount of its annual consumption for 1934. The British concerns Imperial Chemical Industries and Vickers supplied the German military industry with raw materials and strategic materials, the British Petroleum Company supplied aluminum. Deliveries were carried out both openly and secretly, in particular through Canada. This fact was revealed by the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Harry Pollitt, in connection with the investigation by the Royal Commission of the private production and trade in arms, which [169]assumed scandalous proportions. Speaking at a meeting of the commission, G. Pollit drew the attention of those present to the fact that the chairman of the commission, D. Banks himself, is a shareholder of an English concern involved in arms speculation {590} .

The Rolls-Royce automobile company handed over to the Nazi government, allegedly for "commercial purposes", a batch of new Kestrel-type engines used in combat aircraft. In April 1934, the Armstrong-Siddley company sold to Germany aircraft engines created as a result of sixteen years of research by British engineers {591}. And in May, the Nazis placed an order in England for 80 powerful aircraft engines from this company. In response to an inquiry in Parliament, Foreign Minister Simon announced that the execution of the order "does not contravene the terms of existing international agreements." Aircraft, tanks, and machine guns were imported from England to Germany. Despite the fact that Germany's rearmament was rampant and she was preparing to officially announce the legalization of the construction of the air force and the introduction of universal conscription, the British government, and primarily the conservatives, continued to support the formula of "equality" in armaments {592} .

English military circles played an active pro-German role. The Imperial General Staff established close contacts with the command of the Nazi Wehrmacht. According to the then German military

attache in London, the command of the British General Staff believed that "Germany should use the favorable chance in order to put things in order in Europe in the future" {593} . The British military representatives in Germany openly expressed their satisfaction with the build-up of the German armed forces. "On March 16, 1935," Guderian wrote in his memoirs, "I was invited to an evening conversation with the British military attache (in Berlin. - Ed.). Shortly before I left home, the radio broadcast a government announcement about the re-introduction of compulsory military service in Germany. The conversation I had that evening with the English attache and an officer I knew from Sweden who was present was extremely lively. Both of these officers expressed complete understanding when I said that the German army met with satisfaction the joyful news of the introduction of universal military service .

Formally, the British government sent a note with "objections" in connection with the introduction of universal conscription in Germany. But, in essence, it meant a covert approval of the actions of the Nazis. "If the German government," Pravda wrote on March 20, 1935, exposing the policy of British imperialism, "ostentatiously rejected any guarantees of security and is furiously arming itself in order to impose a new war on Europe, then it dared to take this step only thanks to the position British imperialism... British imperialism does its best to hinder the coordinated actions of those for whom the armaments of fascist Germany are an immediate danger. [170]

On March 24-26, 1935, Simon and Hitler held talks in Berlin. They took place in the presence of Lord Privy Seal Eden and the British ambassador in Berlin, Phipps. Neurath and Ribbentrop were also present on the German side. Hitler delivered a long speech in which he demanded for Germany a powerful army, navy, and air force "necessary to solve the problem of living space", including at the expense of the USSR. He also put forward demands: to liquidate the "Polish corridor", to annex the northern regions of Czechoslovakia and Austria to Germany. During the negotiations, Hitler raised the question of the return of Germany's former colonies, which provoked an objection from Simon, and of a revision of the

agreement on naval armaments. Although in this aggressive program outlined by Hitler, there were clear outlines of a military threat to the Western countries, it corresponded to the main intention of British imperialism - to direct the German war machine to the East, against the USSR. Hitler was pleased with the meeting, as well as other contacts with the British ministers. "We understood each other" {595} , - he confidentially informed his associates.

The materials of German diplomatic documents of that time convincingly testify that Hitler's Germany relied on England as the main international force in its preparations for war. The German ambassador in London reported on Wilhelmstrasse {596} in March 1935: "Now we have achieved the actual equality of rights for Germany in armaments on land; the task of the German state leadership is to complete this enormous achievement ... The key to a positive solution lies in the hands of England» {597} .

Further events were not long in coming. On June 18, 1935, the Conservative government, headed by Baldwin, signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, which was the largest act of encouragement by British imperialism of the arms race and aggressive plans of Nazi Germany.

The Anglo-German Naval Agreement was not "the most unexpected act", as Winston Churchill {598} tried to assert . It deliberately opened up the possibilities for fascist Germany for a huge, virtually limitless, increase in its naval forces. The agreement was concluded despite the official protest of France, and became one of the links in the treacherous policy of the British ruling circles towards their French ally {599} .

The agreement was primarily directed against the USSR, as it led to a sharp change in the strategic situation in the Baltic Sea in favor of Germany. This was noted in English and American official circles {600} . At the same time, it changed the balance of power in the North Sea, which created a potential threat from Germany to both England and France. With the assistance of the British ruling circles, Hitlerite Germany forged weapons, which in the end [170] were

turned not only against the USSR, but also against England and France and their allies.

The international communist movement correctly assessed the events that were taking place and warned the working people in good time about the consequences of the reactionary foreign policy of the British ruling circles. "The line pursued by the British national government in support of fascist Germany, and in particular the Anglo-German naval agreement," wrote R. Palm Dutt at the end of 1935, "led to such a situation that contributes to the implementation of the German "plans for Austria and the South-East Europe" {601} . Subsequent events confirmed this conclusion.

It should be noted that not all representatives of the ruling circles of England supported the policy of remilitarization of Germany, but the opinion of the opponents of such a course did not influence the policy of the conservatives.

The Communist Party of Great Britain, which relied on the anti-war movement of the working masses, acted as a resolute and consistent fighter against the suicidal policy of encouraging the British ruling circles to encourage the revival of the German military machine and fascism.

The British people responded to the growing danger of war by intensifying their struggle against the government's reactionary home and foreign policy. In June 1935, the results of the so-called "peace plebiscite" were summed up in England, in which, despite the negative attitude of the government, the Conservative Party and the reactionary press, 11.5 million people took part. The overwhelming majority of the participants in the plebiscite spoke in favor of collective security, disarmament, and effective sanctions against aggressive states. "Undoubtedly," G. Pollit noted in his speech at the 7th Congress of the Comintern, "the same result could be achieved by organizing such a vote against fascism" {602}. However, the British monopolists and the Conservative government did not take into account the opinion of the people. With stubborn tenacity, they continued to follow the anti-Soviet course, encouraging German expansion and fascism.

The Nazi leadership, taking into account the line of the conservatives, drew the appropriate conclusions for their aggressive plans. Hitler, according to the West German historian S. Haffner, believed that he could carry out "the capture of living space at the expense of Russia" with the help of his most dependable ally - England {603} . Anglo-German cooperation, which was formed on an anti-Soviet basis, was one of the important factors that contributed to the transformation of Germany into the main center of the Second World War.

2. Internal political struggle in the United States of America and assistance of the American monopolies to Nazi Germany

The development of world events was significantly influenced by the foreign policy of the United States of America, conditioned by the domestic policy of the ruling circles of the country.

The situation in the USA was characterized by sharp class contradictions, as well as by the struggle of various political trends, the roots of which were deeply rooted in the field of economics. [172]

The First World War was widely used by the US monopolies as a source of unprecedented enrichment. Significantly increased industrial and agricultural production, fertile ground arose for its increase in the years of post-war capitalist stabilization (1924-1929). From 1913 to 1929, US industrial production rose by 70 percent {604}. The profits of the monopolies and banks reached enormous proportions, and the process of centralization of capital intensified extraordinarily. By 1918, one percent of the country's population owned more than half of all US wealth. Along with the economic might of the monopolies, their political strength and influence on all aspects of the country's social life have increased. However, there was no unity among the monopolists in determining the government's course, which led to sharp turns in the country's domestic and foreign policy.

The new balance of economic forces that developed after the First World War had a significant impact on US foreign policy. By 1928, US industrial production exceeded that of all of capitalist Europe.

The economic center of world capitalism has moved across the ocean to the American continent. From being a debtor, the United States became a powerful creditor: if by the beginning of the First World War they owed European countries 4.5 billion dollars, by the end of it, the war debts of capitalist Europe alone to the United States of America amounted to 10 billion dollars.

V. I. Lenin wrote: "The American billionaires were almost all richer and were in the safest geographical position. They profited the most. They made everything, even the richest countries, their tributaries. They have plundered hundreds of billions of dollars." {605} . From now on, the American monopolists, spreading the idea that a new world war would be not a disaster for the United States, but a boon, cherished plans for new enrichment.

But even with such profits received from military supplies and robbery of other countries, the labor of producers of material values, primarily workers, remained the main source of profit for the United States. Their position, as well as that of the farmers, remained extremely difficult. During the war years and in the post-war period, the intensity of labor increased sharply, and capitalist exploitation intensified.

In the United States, a labor movement was booming, inspired by the October Revolution in Russia. Strikes were the main form of action by the American proletariat against the policy of the ruling circles. In 1919, more than 4 million people took part in them. The growing consciousness of the working class led to the emergence of the Communist Party of the USA, founded in September 1919.

The working class of the United States resolutely opposed the participation of their country in the armed attack of the interventionists on the young Soviet state and sought to provide it with international support. However, any manifestation of class solidarity between US workers and Soviet Russia was mercilessly suppressed by the government, which increasingly resorted to the means of class violence, to arms.

In 1929, the United States suffered a severe economic crisis, from where it spread throughout the world. By March 1933, the number

of unemployed reached 17 million people. There was no social insurance, and the unemployed, deprived of their livelihood, were on the verge of starvation. [173]

The bourgeois historian Schlesinger described the plight of a working-class family in this way: "And here is a new search for work - first energetic and hopeful, then gloomy, then desperate ... The search continues, clothes turn into tatters, shoes come apart. The newspaper under the shirt saves from the frost, the cardboard insulates the boots, the cotton wool in their socks softens the difficult walking through the streets, the mat wrapped around the feet facilitates the long hours of waiting in the cold at the factory gates. Meanwhile, savings are dwindling and horror seizes the family. Father has lost his vigor, he spends many hours at home, irritated, guilty ... Meat disappears from the table, lard replaces butter, father goes out less and less, he is terribly quiet ... Shadows thicken in dark cold rooms, father is angry, helpless, and full of shame, emaciated children are getting sick more often, and a mother, invigorating during the day,{606} .

The working class in the United States was not a passive contemplator of the scourge of the economic crisis that befell it. On March 6, 1930, crowded demonstrations of the unemployed took place in dozens of cities, demanding that they be given work and bread. A large police force deployed against the demonstrators brutally cracked down on them. In 1931-1932. massive "hunger campaigns" took place in Washington.

During the second "hunger campaign" 25 thousand veterans of the First World War arrived in the capital. They pitched their camp in Anacostia Flats, a swampy suburb of Washington. The manifestation of former soldiers was held under the slogans of loyalty to the existing system and was not associated with the leftist movement in the country. However, the government sent troops against the veterans under the command of the Chief of Staff of the American Army, General D. MacArthur. Tanks, cavalry, and tear gas were used.

Farmers also joined in the struggle against the ruling circles, who sought to put the entire burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the working people. In a number of areas of the United States, joint action committees of farmers and workers arose. Representatives of the progressive intelligentsia also joined the movement. The economic crisis developed into a political crisis, a crisis of the entire system of American capitalism. The newspapers wrote with dismay: "The disturbing economic phenomena not only surpass all previous episodes of this kind, but also threaten the death of the capitalist system" {607}

The masses listened more attentively to the voice of the communists, whose influence was growing, especially among the unemployed. The resulting situation caused deep concern among the rulers of the United States. Although a relatively small part of class-conscious workers followed the Communists, Washington tried to blame the US Communist Party for all the troubles that the country was going through. In May 1930, a committee was organized in the House of Representatives to "investigate communism." In its fight against left-wingers, the government made extensive use of the expulsion of "undesirable elements" from the country. In 1930-1933 74 thousand people were deported from the USA.

The anti-communist campaign, contrary to the hopes of its instigators, could not alleviate the situation in the country. It was obvious to millions of Americans that the capitalist system was to blame for the crisis, and they rose more and more actively against the bourgeois order.

But the government was ready to suppress any mass demonstrations. In January 1934, G. Woodring, who was soon appointed Secretary of War, [174] frankly stated: "People who believe that the American army is not ready and not able to take control of the country simply do not know the facts. Our army is the only government organization that is already ready not only to defend the country, but also able to cope with social and economic problems in the event of a state of emergency ... Let's be direct! If there is a threat of external war, economic chaos or social revolution,

the army has the training, experience, organization, and people to protect the government ... " {608}

However, some representatives of the American bourgeoisie believed that the mere readiness of the armed forces to suppress social unrest was not enough. They demanded that the threat of revolution be met at a distant approach, insisting on a change in the US state structure. There was no unity in the ruling circles on this issue. A certain part of the monopolists, bankers and military men were inclined to borrow the experience of Italy and establish a fascist dictatorship. Conservative publicist V. Jordan described the mood of the participants in the annual conference of the Chamber of Commerce in 1931 as follows: "In a matter of months, an economic dictator like Mussolini can induce them to march in red, white, blue shirts, welcoming some new symbol." In the spring of 1932, Pennsylvania Senator D. Reed found it possible to state publicly: "I rarely envy the system of government in other countries, but I say: if our country ever needed Mussolini, then now is the hour." In 1931, the president of Columbia University, N. Butler, greeted the freshmen with a speech in which, among other things, he said that totalitarian systems "put forward much more intelligent, strong-willed and much more courageous people than states with a representative form of government" {609} . These assessments also extended to the leaders of the fascist dictatorship in Germany. The chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, K. Pittman, called Hitler "a man of courage and zeal", "a crusader ... in the struggle against Bolshevism" {610} .

Not only individuals, but also entire organizations spoke in favor of the fascist regime in the United States. In September 1931, the American Legion (a far-right organization of ex-servicemen) decided at its convention that the crisis could not be "quickly and effectively resolved by existing political methods." In the Midwest, the Black Legion terrorist organization arose, the center of activity of which was in the state of Michigan. The Black Legion, named after the uniform, worn by its members, a black robe with a skull and crossbones and a hood covering the face, was a typical fascist organization.

The "Black Legion" was built on a military model. Its members were included in the territorial "divisions" commanded by "colonels". The activities of the legion were kept in strict secrecy. At an extremely grim legionary initiation ceremony, each was given a large-caliber bullet with a warning that he would receive another if he did not remain silent. Since 1933, the states of Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio have become the arena of the bloody activities of the Black Legion, which, in close contact with the entrepreneurs, unleashed terror against active trade union workers and democratically minded people. In the mid-1930s, legionnaires [175] killed several dozen people, trying to intimidate, first of all, representatives of the labor movement.

In January 1932, a new senator, Hugh Long, from Louisiana appeared in the Capitol. A short but noisy career began for a man who sought to create a fascist dictatorship. Before being elected to the Senate, Long was the governor of Louisiana, where he created a powerful political machine, personally devoted to him.

Since becoming a senator, Long from the first days challenged not only the government, but also the faction of the Democratic Party to which he belonged. In the spirit of fascist demagogues, Long declared that "in America, of course, we are in the face of communism." Heaping curses on the "rich", he vaguely promised a better future to broad sections of the people, where there would be no blatant inequality. And he said this, widely using the support of large monopolies, which personified inequality. However, the more influential part of the monopolists believed that the extremes of fascism would add fuel to the fire of popular indignation and create an even greater danger to the social and political system of the United States. They tended to put at the head of the country a man who could bring peace to the masses through a system of reforms that did not affect the foundations of American bourgeois democracy.

The election campaign of 1932 for the presidential elections took place in an extremely tense atmosphere. The Democratic Party nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt, who promised a "New Deal" for the country.

Roosevelt was a staunch defender of the capitalist system, and all his policies were aimed at strengthening it. In pursuing the New Deal, he made extensive use of social maneuvering methods and tried to alleviate the position of the working people, but by no means by weakening the role of monopoly capital. On the contrary, the "new course" contributed to the strengthening of the role of state-monopoly capitalism in the economy and political life of the country.

William Foster, who for a long time headed the US Communist Party, wrote: "... Roosevelt supported the trade union movement, but by making concessions to the workers and blacks, he thereby undoubtedly acted in the interests of the capitalist system. Had he not made these concessions, the belligerent masses would probably have moved considerably further to the left, and in open struggle would have won much more substantial reforms from the employers and the government .

F. Roosevelt took various, often contradictory measures. In his eyes, there was only one criterion for the value of this or that law - to what extent it corresponded to the strengthening of the traditional foundations of American capitalism.

The right wing of the US ruling circles was dissatisfied with the social maneuvering of the Roosevelt administration, during which significant concessions were sometimes made to the working people. Opposition to the "new course" existed constantly, and various fascist organizations arose in its ranks, the number of which eventually reached 700.

The day after the Nazis came to power in Germany - January 31, 1933 - W. Pelley founded the Silver Shirts organization in the USA. He stated that her goal was to save America "in the same way that Mussolini and his Blackshirts saved Italy, and Hitler and his Brownshirts brought salvation to Germany." The Silver Shirts became one of the most active fascist organizations in the United States. [176]

Another reactionary figure, "Honorary Commander of the Order of the Knights of the White Camellia" J. Ditheridge, announced that he

was striving to unite all "Christians" (that is, racists) under the emblem of the swastika {612} . The vigorous activity of fascist organizations would not have been possible without the financial assistance of representatives of big business, who kept them as a reserve in case the government failed in social experimentation.

Fascist organizations in the United States openly declared their solidarity with the European fascist powers. Their activities were of a subversive nature since they were agents of Nazi Germany in the United States.

In 1931-1934. in some Wall Street banking houses, they thought of using the American Legion to carry out a fascist coup in the United States. The pro-fascist sympathies of the leaders of the legion were no secret. Back in 1931, National Commander R. O'Neill conveyed, through the ambassador of fascist Italy in Washington, the greetings of the national executive committee of the Legion "His Grace Benito Mussolini." Two years later, the national vice-commander visited Italy and bestowed on the Duce the title of honorary member of the Legion.

The conspirators decided to put the retired General S. Butler, a former commander of the Marine Corps, at the head of the coup. But here they were mistaken: S. Butler, pretending to be a simpleton, found out the details of the conspiracy, the sources of its financing, and, finding this enterprise unconstitutional and dubious, passed the collected information to Congress, where in 1934 an appropriate investigation was carried out. The consideration of the case, entrusted to one of the congressional committees, was extremely superficial. However, the veracity of Butler's testimony was not in doubt. No matter how hard American fascist collaborators tried to belittle their importance, the commission admitted in its investigation report: "Evidence was presented indicating that some individuals made an attempt to create a fascist organization in our country. No doubt{613}

Butler's failure did not discourage the right. They founded the League of American Freedom in August 1934, which announced that it would "fight against radicalism" and "guard and defend the

constitution." The League was supported by a number of major monopolists, primarily the DuPonts and Morgans. The American Liberty League was an active right-wing front seeking to cut off further concessions to working people under the New Deal. She steadily opposed new measures of this kind, and her massive propaganda was marked by fierce malice towards the F. Roosevelt administration. This was a much more serious attempt to organize the forces of reaction than the conspiracy proposed by Butler to lead.

Minister of the Interior G. Ickes, describing the situation that developed in the United States in 1935, said: "Every day it becomes more and more clear that in our country there is a dangerous movement that seeks to replace our free institutions with hated fascism. This group is made up of (or at least actively supported by) individuals who have amassed vast fortunes and achieved power by exploiting not only America's natural wealth, but also its men and women .[177]and children. They stopped at nothing in their pursuit of these riches, and now they will stop at nothing to preserve and increase them. In an effort to drive us into a patriotic fever with talk that "our country is threatened by a communist uprising," these gentlemen are trying to enlist our support for a fascist coup .

As industrial tycoon K. Vanderbilt later admitted, far-right businessmen discussed at length a plan to kidnap the president in order to change the political course of the country {615} .

Although hotheads among the rightists were ready to launch a coup, their chances of success were slim. The greatest opportunity was offered by an attempt to rebuild the United States in a fascist spirit, using at first the traditional institutions of the country, that is, seeking accession to the White House as a result of the usual electoral procedure of a person with dictatorial powers. In the United States in the first half of the 1930s, there were two potential candidates of this kind—General D. MacArthur, Chief of Staff of the American Army, and Senator H. Long. With the proper support of financial tycoons, any of them could win the presidential election, and even in case of failure, grow into a figure of paramount national importance. F. Roosevelt in the circle of his associates called them "two of the most dangerous people in the United States."

General MacArthur was the idol of extreme reaction, which remembered and blessed his "victory at Anacostia Flats." "No one else," said Roosevelt, "is endowed with such charm, fidelity to tradition, and stately appearance as MacArthur, and Nazi-minded American leaders recalled with approval an incident that seemed to all liberals to be reprehensible - the battle of Anacostia Flats" {616} .

Fascist tendencies were fought against by progressive forces, and above all by the American Communists. They tirelessly exposed the intrigues of the right-wing forces and revealed the secret plans of the reaction.

What became obvious over time was far from always clearly manifested in the turbulent whirlpool of the 1930s. The left-wing forces that criticized the administration of F. Roosevelt, sometimes focusing on the cool methods of implementing the New Deal reforms, in fact, did not clearly imagine that there were significant differences between the government and fascist circles. Roosevelt relied on that part of the American bourgeoisie that believed that the resources of the traditional system of government in the United States had not been exhausted. The people, having received some relief from the New Deal, stood for Roosevelt. Under the current conditions, the identification of the "new course" and fascism would be extremely erroneous.

At the 7th Congress of the Communist International G. Dimitrov said: "But even now there are still remnants of a schematic approach to fascism. Isn't it a manifestation of this... approach is the assertion of individual comrades that Roosevelt's "new order" is an even clearer, sharper form of development of the bourgeoisie towards fascism...? A significant amount of schematism is needed in order not to see that the most reactionary circles of the American financial capitalists attacking Roosevelt are, above all, the force that stimulates and organizes the fascist movement in the United States. Don't see [178]Behind the hypocritical phrases of such circles about "defending the democratic rights of American citizens" of real fascism emerging in the United States, this means disorienting the working class in the struggle against its worst enemy" {617} .

F. Roosevelt's administration fought against those who, in the opinion of the White House, posed a real threat to the existing order. In 1935, MacArthur was removed from the key post of Army Chief of Staff and sent to serve in the Philippines. The ambitious general was mortally offended and in the next 16 years he never visited his homeland - the United States.

It was much more difficult to throw Senator X. Long from the political arena, who launched a feverish activity already on the distant approaches to the presidential elections of 1936. When it became clear that Long had achieved a certain fame, funds began to flow to him from dark sources, which gave him the opportunity to find a newspaper "American Progress". Although the newspaper suffered constant losses, the help of the right allowed Long in 1935 to bring its circulation to 375,000 copies. Back in October 1933, Long's book was published with the demagogic title "Every Man Is a King!" In 343 pages of this new fascist bible, the senator tried to prove that he was "fighting for the rights of the common man." Even at a negligible, by American standards, price of \$1, only 20,000 books were sold, and Long's supporters distributed another 70,000 copies for free.

Another fascist demagogue directed his efforts in the same direction as Long, the Detroit Catholic priest C. Coughlin. His activity began during the years of the crisis and reached its climax in the mid-1930s. The sermons of the "Holy Father", broadcast over the radio from his church in Michigan, were listened to by 3.5 million people, according to a minimum estimate. Coughlin vilified Wall Street, intellectuals, Jews, openly supported the fascist powers, sought to make Americans feel sympathy for the global strategy of German fascism and the methods for implementing its program. According to Roosevelt Attorney General F. Biddle, Coughlin and "his fighters from the Christian Front and Christian Activists adhered to the tactics of virulent anti-Semitism preached by the Brownshirts of Hitler and the SA" {618} .

In early 1935, Long and Coughlin entered into an unspoken alliance. The sinister "radio pop" found it possible to support the senator's candidacy if she ran in the 1936 presidential election {619} .

Roosevelt, concerned about the activities of Long and his supporters in preparation for the presidential election, took a number of countermeasures. In particular, he gave a secret order to investigate the activities of Long's organization in order to obtain information compromising him. The federal authorities have come to grips with the study of corruption in the state of Louisiana. They accused several of Long's associates of theft and put them on trial. In response, Long announced that he would fight the Roosevelt government to the end {620} .

There was no doubt that Hugh Long was bringing fascism to the United States. Communist Party publications constantly emphasized that Long was "the personification of the fascist menace"; it was he, as explained, for example, in *The Daily Worker* on March 12 and 15, 1935, who was the contender for the role [179] of the American Hitler or Mussolini. Although Long, no doubt for tactical reasons, rejected analogies between him and Hitler, his entire course of action indicated the opposite.

In March 1935, General H. Johnson, a man close to the White House, sharply opposed to the alliance between Long and Coughlin, said: "You can laugh at Father Coughlin, you can snort at the name of Hugh Long, but never has our country been danger." In his words, "the great Louisiana demagogue and politicking padre" hoped to carry out a plan in which "American Hitler would enter Washington at the head of the troops." Johnson urged his compatriots to reject Long and Coughlin, to rally around F. Roosevelt, for "in him is our only hope" {621} .

The presidential election was still more than a year away, and Long's election campaign had entered the practical stage. He did not skimp on expenses. In addition to large proceeds from the Louisiana party machine, he received secret assurances from representatives of a number of leading monopolies and banks that they would provide up to \$ 2 million to his fund, and if necessary - and more with the only condition - to remove F. Roosevelt from the White House { 622}

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In early September 1935, Long arrived in Louisiana on political business. He held a series of meetings, and on the evening of September 8 he went to the governor of the state. In the corridor of the reception room of the governor's palace, under circumstances that are still unclear, a shootout broke out, during which Long was killed.

The movement of Long's supporters after his assassination actually disintegrated. Although the US fascist organizations did not stop their activities, none of their leaders was even remotely popular as Long. The insolent bandits from the "Black Legion" after a series of murders were brought to justice; eleven of them were sentenced to life imprisonment {623} . The prosecution, of course, did not affect all the perpetrators, but it served as a certain warning to the unbridled fascists.

The fascist movement in the United States did not develop further, because the vast majority of the ruling circles of the country evaluated the "new course" as the most effective means of preserving capitalism in American conditions. "They understood," wrote G. Green, a member of the National Committee of the US Communist Party, "that American capitalism still had vast reserves with which to weather the storm; he was not in such a desperate situation as German capitalism... The capitalist factions that encouraged Roosevelt's domestic policy, or at least did not actively oppose it, as a rule, felt more than others, fear of German imperialism, and demanded a firm policy towards to him. They even looked favorably on the anti-fascist movement both at home and abroad,{624} .

As a result of maneuvering along the paths of the New Deal, the administration of F. Roosevelt managed to reduce the intensity of social tension in the United States. In this situation, the slide towards fascism was simply not necessary for the monopolists. [180] The complex and contradictory processes that took place in the domestic life of the United States also influenced their foreign policy.

The ruling circles of the USA knew that the German monopolists, in their plans for conquest, would also lure the American continent. However, this did not give rise to concern, because, firstly, American

imperialism considered Nazi Germany dangerous only for the USSR, and secondly, the United States was confident, based on the experience of the First World War, that a new world war would not affect the territory of their country. , but on the other hand, it will allow to get out of the economic crisis and become a source of profits for monopolies. The monopolies not connected with military production feared the war and its social consequences.

In order not to weaken their position within the United States, Roosevelt and his entourage did not want to come into conflict with those American monopolies and banks that were actively helping Germany prepare for World War II. Although fears of Nazi aggression were often heard in the speeches of the American president, the US government did not take the necessary real measures even within the country (against fascist organizations and monopolies associated with German firms), and even more so in the field of foreign policy. The notorious "neutrality" in relation to the aggressors, but in fact their encouragement, reflected the essence of the policy of those American monopolies, whose influence on the government prevailed.

The ideologists of American imperialism, covering the events of the pre-war years, seek to whitewash the criminal policy of encouraging fascist aggression by "isolationism of the masses." D. Perkins writes that it is precisely for this reason that the US government "did not make great efforts to direct its European policy along the line of concerted action" {625} .

W. Langer and S. Gleason argue that "the prevailing mood was a resolute opposition not only to any intervention in conflicts abroad, but also to participation in any collective action to prevent or resolve such conflicts. Behind the high wall of neutrality, the American people considered it wise to work quietly for their own good, despite all the storms that might break out elsewhere .

The existence of such sentiments is an absolute historical fact. But they did not come from the masses, but from the ruling circles and their propaganda. The working people of the USA, according to W.

Foster, actively opposed fascism and did not at all support the false "isolationism" of the ruling circles {627} .

The Roosevelt government pursued a kind of "neutrality" in relation to the ties between American and German monopoly capital. It did not oppose such connections, and the slogan "defending democracy against totalitarianism" to a certain extent contributed to them {628} .

And although most of the American capital in German industry [181] was invested before Hitler came to power, their flow continued after, until the outbreak of the Second World War.

J. Schacht played an important role in strengthening relations between Nazi Germany and the USA. As early as February 1933, he convinced the US Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin that the fascist regime "poses no danger to American business in Germany" {629}. Shortly after his appointment to the post of president of the Reichsbank, which was received positively by the international monopolies, Schacht left for the USA in May 1933 to consolidate and expand contacts between the fascist leaders of Germany and the ruling circles of America. As an emissary for Hitler and the German monopolists, Schacht met with President Roosevelt, government officials, and Wall Street bosses. Schacht assured his interlocutors that "there is no more democratic government in the world than the government of Hitler", that the fascist regime "is the best form of democracy" {630} , and sought to provide Germany with new American loans. Departing from New York for Europe, Schacht said that he was quite satisfied with the results of his visit.

Shakht also contributed to the expansion of ties between the Nazis and the monopoly circles of other countries. In June 1933, as a member of the German delegation at the international economic conference in London, he, together with the ideologist of the fascist party Rosenberg, took part in the development of the so-called "Hugenberg memorandum", with which the Nazis tried to intimidate the Western powers with the "danger of Bolshevism" and bargain for yourself loans {631} .

After a series of maneuvers, the German government gradually reduced the payment of loan payments, and in 1935 completely

suspended the payment of debts. Thus, with the help of the American and British financial oligarchy, which was interested in restoring the military and economic potential of fascist Germany, the Nazis received large sums, which they directed to armaments.

A large role in coordinating the efforts of the international banking oligarchy in financing the fascist movement in Germany was played by the Cologne banker Baron Schroeder, who was associated with the Nazi Party. He maintained close contacts with branches of his banking firm in the US and England. All legal formalities for loans passing through the Schroeder Bank were carried out in America by the law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell, headed by the brothers John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and others.

Shortly after the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, representatives of the US banking associations Aldrich and Mann visited Germany to discuss issues related to the financing of German armaments. A few days later, in a conversation with the American ambassador in Berlin, they declared that Hitler "can be dealt with" {632}. As a result of the negotiations, an important agreement was reached. American banks delayed receiving payments from Germany on previously granted loans. They pledged that henceforth all income from American capital and property in Germany would be spent exclusively within that country. The German and American bankers agreed on the most important thing—that US capital would take an active part in the rearmament of Germany, either by building new military enterprises on its territory or by reconstructing the existing ones. Among them [182]there were Ford automobile plants in Cologne and the Opel plant in Rüsselheim, in the expansion of which General Motors invested, plants of the American companies General Electric and International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT); Standard Oil built an oil refinery in Hamburg, at that time the largest in the world.

Of the American firms and banks that actively contributed to the seizure of power by the Nazis in Germany, and then to their military preparations, many belonged to Zionist capital. The list of banks and firms that helped Nazi Germany looks like a reference book of US Zionist capital. Particularly active were the bankers Lazar and

Liman, connected with German firms by business and family relations. The prominent Zionist activist N. Goldman, who for a long time headed the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Organization, notes in his autobiography that when some Jewish organizations in the USA tried to organize an international economic boycott of Germany, Zionist firms, being contractors of German companies, thwarted this boycott {633} .

Helped the Nazis and: Zionist leaders from other countries. So, back in 1929, the Amsterdam banking house Mendelssohn & Co. transferred 10 million dollars to Hitler. In 1931, he, together with the Rotterdam banking consortium and through the Rome commercial bank, handed another 15 million dollars to the leader of the German fascists. Finally, after Hitler came to power, he received 126 million dollars {634} through the same channels .

Of great importance for the armament of Germany and the creation of its military machine were the direct investments of American capital in German industry. According to official figures, direct American investment in German industry in 1930 amounted to \$216.5 million. In Germany, there were up to 60 branches of American concerns {635} . Senator Kilgore said in 1943: "Great sums of American money went abroad to build factories, which are now a misfortune to our existence and a constant hindrance to our war effort" {636}. Kilgore had every reason to make such a statement, since the Senate commission, headed by him, determined the amount of American investment in Germany at \$1 billion. The Kilgore Commission also found that only a fraction of American companies owned such a large share of the share capital, which allowed them to control 278 German joint-stock companies. This shows how much during the years of the Hitlerite dictatorship the ties between the American and German monopolists strengthened and how great was the role of US capital not only in the reconstruction, but also in the further development of the military-industrial potential of fascist Germany.

American investments were directed primarily to machine-building, automotive, electrical, aviation, oil, chemical and other branches of

industry of military importance. The US monopolies did not help Germany disinterestedly. Their investments yielded large returns.

Most cartel agreements between American and German firms were concluded in 1926-1929, during the period of the Dawes Plan. [183]

A particularly important role in the preparations for the war was played by the cartel connections of the concerns of the metallurgical industry. Back in 1926, an international steel cartel was created, which included the metallurgical magnates of Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Saarland. The organizer of the cartel was E. Pensgen - the head of the concern "Steel Trust" {637} .

Later, the circle of cartel members expanded. It included the main steel producers in Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, England and the USA, the largest American steel companies United States Steel, Bethlehem Steel and Republic Steel. The cartel began to produce about 90 percent of the iron and steel supplied to the world market. The leading role in the cartel belonged to the German monopolies, in particular the Steel Trust. The Nazis highly valued Pensgen's merits in arming Germany.

In 1929, an agreement was concluded between the American oil trust Standard Oil and the German chemical concern IG Farbenindustrie, which played a major role in preparing Nazi Germany for a world war. The IG Farbenindustrie concern received over 60 million dollars from Standard Oil to develop a technology for the production of synthetic fuel on an industrial scale {638} . With the advent of the Nazis to power, the ties between the US and German monopolies became even closer.

With the active assistance of American firms, the German imperialists organized the importation of weapons from abroad on a large scale. In just eight months of 1934, the American aviation company Aircraft Corporation increased its exports to Germany by 6.4 times compared to 1933. In addition to the Aircraft Corporation, other American firms were also involved in the supply of aircraft. The United Aircraft Transport company imported parts for the construction of aircraft, the Sperry Gyroscope Company imported aircraft radio equipment. The American companies Curtiss Wright,

American Aircraft and others sent their products to Germany on a large scale - mainly engines and aircraft.

Of particular importance for Germany was the granting of patents by American firms for the latest inventions in the field of aviation. Pratt & Whitney entered into an agreement with the German company Bayerische Motorwerke to transfer to Germany a patent for air-cooled aircraft engines. The American company United Aircraft Export transferred its patents for military aircraft to a German company. Germany sold a patent for a new aircraft, the largest American company "Douglas".

In February 1933, Dupont's American chemical trust entered into an agreement with IG Farbenindustrie for the sale of explosives and ammunition, which were sent to Germany via Holland.

As early as 1934, arms supplies from the United States to Germany reached such proportions that they became interested in the Senate commission investigating the activities of military enterprises. The commission found that there are many secret agreements between American and German firms on mutual information and the exchange of patents in the field of weapons. Commission member Senator Clark said: "If Germany were active tomorrow in the military sense, it would be more powerful thanks to the patents and technical experience transferred to it by American firms." [184]

In 1940, US Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox admitted that "in 1934 and 1935. Hundreds of first-class aircraft engines manufactured in the USA were supplied to Hitler, "and a Senate commission in the same 1940 concluded that" American industrialists, with the consent of the US government, freely sold patents and rights to design motors to the German government ... " {639} .

Standard Oil took over the financing of the construction of new synthetic fuel plants in Germany {640} . The scope of funding can be judged from the statement of the American commercial attache in Berlin, who in December 1935 in an official conversation noted that "after two years, Germany will produce oil and gas from coal in quantities sufficient for a long war. Standard Oil gave her millions of dollars for this

The Standard Oil Trust not only actively helped to establish the production of synthetic gasoline, but also spent large sums on the exploration and organization of oil production in Germany {642} . The trust owned more than half of the capital of the oil company, which owned more than a third of all gas stations. The German-American oil company owned oil refineries, mineral oil plants. When the World War began, there were coal hydrogenation plants in Germany and Japan. But they were not in the US.

In 1935, shortly after Hitler broke the military articles of the Treaty of Versailles and introduced universal conscription in Germany, the American company Ethyl Gasoline Corporation transferred, with the permission of the American government, a patent that it owned exclusively for the production of tetraethyl lead, an anti-knock additive in gasoline. In one of the secret documents that became known after the war, IG Farbenindustrie experts assessed the importance of the help of an American company as follows: "There is no need to emphasize that modern war is unthinkable without tetraethyl lead. Since the beginning of the war, we have been able to produce tetraethyl lead solely because shortly before that, the Americans built a plant for us, prepared it for operation, and passed on to us the necessary experience" {643}. Equally great was the help of American capital in the development of methods for the production of synthetic rubber.

Jasko's labs and pilot plant in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, developed the process for mass production of buna rubber. The ownership of this patent passed to a German trust. "Standard Oil" has developed a method for obtaining and production technology of a new type of rubber - butyl, higher in quality than "buna".

The American monopolies also helped fascist Germany in the production of aluminium, magnesium, nickel, tungsten carbide, beryllium, and other strategic materials.

In 1935, the German production of light and non-ferrous metals already exceeded the French and Canadian four times, the British and Norwegian - six times, exceeded the American output by 16 thousand tons {644} . [185]

For the successful preparation of the war, the Nazis considered it extremely necessary to weaken Germany's dependence on the import of iron ore. In Germany, there were several iron ore deposits with 20-25% iron content. The development of such poor ores was considered unprofitable. Nevertheless, on the basis of these deposits, the construction of three plants began with an annual steel production of 6 million tons, which accounted for a third of all steel production in Germany. Officially, the work was carried out by the Hermann Goering concern, but in reality they were carried out by a specially created American company, R. Brassert. "This company," writes the English economist N. Muhlen, "until then almost unknown in Germany ... turned out to be closely connected with the "autarky" of the Reich in the field of supplying it with iron ore, one of the main elements of economic independence in the production of weapons" {645} . The firm "R. Brassert was only a branch of the large Chicago firm of Brassert, which collaborated with the American Morgan Trust.

Under the terms of the cartel agreements, American firms had to inform their German partners about all the technical innovations of interest to them. Thus, the Bowshend Lomb firm willingly provided Zeiss with US military secrets and only asked that all information be kept secret {646} .

The major role played by the American monopolies in preparing Germany for war was later confirmed by none other than J. Schacht, who was Hitler's right hand in matters of financing military production. While in his cell during the Nuremberg trials, Schacht laughed when he heard that German industrialists would be charged with arming the "Third Reich." "If you want to bring to justice the industrialists who contributed to the armament of Germany," he told an American officer, "then you will have to judge your own industrialists. After all, the Opel factories, which belonged to General Motors, worked only for the war" {647} .

Close ties between the Morgan banking house and the German fascists were established through the international telephone and telegraph corporation, ITT, which was under his complete control.

Shortly after the Nazi takeover in Germany, the chairman of the ITT board was received by Hitler. As a result of the conversation, Ribbentrop's agent G. Vestrik was placed at the head of all three German firms belonging to ITT, who appointed SS leaders and other prominent Nazis {648} to leading positions in the boards of firms and enterprises .

If, through ITT, the Morgan house established control over many enterprises that produced telegraph and telephone equipment, as well as over the radio industry in Germany and extended its tentacles to the aircraft industry, then through another large American company, General Electric, it had close ties with the German electrical industry.

During the years of the fascist dictatorship, General Electric achieved complete control over Allgemeine Electricity Gesellschaft (AEG), the largest German electrical engineering concern with a capital of 120 million marks. Through the AEG, the General Electric firm acquired indirect control over a significant part of the German electrical industry, including [186] the well-known electrical concern Siemens, the Osram electric lamp company , etc. {649}

Thus, despite the fact that fascism within the United States was defeated, a part of the American monopolies adhered to the policy of assisting in arming Hitler's Germany. They bear a large share of the responsibility for the course of events that led to the world war.

3. Foreign policy support for the aggressive course of Germany by the ruling circles of England, the USA and France

The tactics of the Nazis in the field of foreign policy was to prevent the creation of a system of collective security of the peoples, for which the government of the USSR, supported by a number of statesmen of the capitalist countries, consistently fought. This tactic met with understanding and support in the ruling circles of the United States and Britain, and its adherents were influential in France as well.

With the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany, the governments of the Western powers saw a new opportunity for the

foreign policy isolation of the Soviet Union by creating a bloc of major imperialist powers, including Nazi Germany. This course was reflected in the Pact of Four. The initiator of the pact was the fascist dictator of Italy, Mussolini, supported by British Prime Minister MacDonald and Foreign Minister Simon. In March 1933, the Italian ambassador in Berlin presented the draft pact to German Foreign Minister Neurath. The Hitlerite government received it with enthusiasm. After lengthy negotiations, during which the wishes of fascist Germany were taken into account, the "Pact of the Four" (a pact of agreement and cooperation between England, France, Germany, and Italy) was signed in Rome on July 15, 1933.

Under a smoke screen of cooperation "for the purpose of maintaining peace" the four imperialist powers agreed to establish their diktat in Europe on an anti-Soviet basis, and to cooperate in political and in all other matters. In particular, the pact provided for a revision of the Versailles system of peace treaties, the recognition of Germany's equality of rights in arms, cooperation in European and non-European issues, including colonial {650}. Truly, this was a generous gift to Hitler, which significantly strengthened the position of Nazi Germany in the international arena. The pact meant a conspiracy between the governments of England and France with the fascist governments of Germany and Italy, the rejection of a collective rebuff to the aggressors and was aimed at removing the Soviet Union, which was actively fighting to curb the warmongers, from participating in resolving issues of European politics. The pact posed a great threat to the small states of Southeastern and Central Europe, which were in allied relations with France.

The "Pact of Four" also received approval and support in the US ruling circles. On June 9, 1933, in a government statement, he was characterized as a "good omen" {651} .

The governments of England and France believed that the "pact of four" would lead to the fulfillment of their long-standing desire - to create a directory [187] of four powers in Europe (led by the Anglo-French bloc) and turn the German military machine to the east.

However, the "Pact of Four" did not resolve the imperialist contradictions, especially the Franco-German ones. He did not eliminate France's interest in maintaining the Versailles system. Serious concerns were raised by the pact in the countries of the Little Entente and Poland. As early as March 1933, the conference of foreign ministers of the countries of the Little Entente opposed the draft "pact of four".

An exhaustive political assessment of the pact and its inevitable consequences was given by the Soviet Union [652]. The revelation of the true meaning of the pact led to the fact that it was not ratified by France. However, although the "Pact of Four" did not formally enter into force, it had a detrimental effect on the subsequent development of international events. The pact contributed to the undermining of the system of French alliances in Europe and the growth of capitulatory and pro-German sentiments in the ruling circles of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. He also played his part in encouraging the implementation by the Nazis of the program of militarization of the country and the preparation of an aggressive war.

The establishment of the fascist regime in Germany was positively received by the Vatican. On his instructions, the faction of the Catholic Center Party in the Reichstag voted for Hitler in March 1933, and then announced its own dissolution. By the way, one of the first successes of Hitler's diplomacy was an agreement (concordat) concluded with the Vatican on July 20, 1933, on behalf of Hitler by the fascist diplomat and international intelligence officer Papen. The Catholic Church received official protection and support from the Nazi government. In turn, Catholic priests were included in the system of "spiritual education" of the German people and the Wehrmacht in accordance with the chauvinist program of Nazism. The Concordat was the first open international recognition of the fascist terrorist regime in Germany.

The struggle against the Soviet Union, the world revolutionary and democratic movement served as the basis for collusion between the two most reactionary forces in the world—German fascism and the Vatican. In a conversation with the pope's secretary, Cardinal Pacelli

{653} , Papen said that "the German government now has at its head a man who is an uncompromising opponent of communism and Russian nihilism in all its forms" {654} .

The non-aggression pact concluded by the Nazis with the ruling clique of bourgeois-landlord Poland also played an important role in the diplomatic preparations for the Second World War and in undermining the security of the peoples of Europe.

By the time the fascist dictatorship was established, German-Polish relations had reached extreme severity. During the entire period of the Weimar Republic, Polish-German customs conflicts did not stop.

According to the Treaty of Versailles (Article 87), a significant part of the Polish western lands remained with Germany. The governments of the United States, Britain, and France, not wanting to satisfy Poland's legitimate demands for access to the sea, created the so-called "Polish Corridor", which was used by war provocateurs as a source of constant conflicts between Germany and Poland. The ancient Polish city of Gdansk (Danzig), [188]controlling the mouth of the Vistula, was declared a "free city" under the auspices of the League of Nations. The borders of Poland in the west, northwest and north were defined in such a way that Poland was strategically in the German pincers. East Prussia, the hotbed of German militarism and aggression, hung over Poland. More than 700,000 Germans who remained on the territory of Poland were used by the German imperialists for all sorts of provocations. The League of Nations, at almost every meeting, dealt with complaints from Germany about the situation of the German national minority in Poland.

Imperialist Germany never wanted to secure Poland's western frontiers. The German imperialists viewed the Polish state as temporary and called it "Saisonstaat" ("state for the season"). In Hitler's cannibal plans "drang nach Osten" one of the first places (after Austria and Czechoslovakia) was assigned to plans of aggression against Poland.

In the first speeches after the seizure of power, the leaders of Nazi Germany continued to demand the rejection of Polish territories. On February 12, 1933, Hitler said that the question of the "Polish

corridor" should be resolved soon. In the same year, he demanded the transfer of Danzig and the "Polish Corridor" to Germany. With the help of the Nazis, the Danzig fascists captured the majority in the Senate of the "Free City", and Gauleiter Forster became President of the Senate.

Hitler staged a pompous demonstration in early 1933 at the tomb of Frederick II, the initiator of the partition of Poland, who said that it should be "peeled" like a head of cabbage, "leaf by leaf, city by city."

The German-Polish contradictions were widely used by the imperialist circles in the USA, Britain, and France in their behind-the-scenes combinations. Soon articles appeared in the American and British press, and the book "Boiling Cauldron" was published in the United States, where the idea of the expediency of transferring the "Polish corridor" to Germany in exchange for joining Lithuanian Klaipeda to Poland was persistently promoted. The constant contacts of the publisher of a number of English newspapers, Lord Rothermere, with German propaganda centers and his activities in favor of the transfer of Pomerania, Upper Silesia, Danzig and the "Polish Corridor" {655} to Germany encouraged the revanchist claims of German imperialism.

The Nazis tried to create the appearance of a change in their policy towards Poland. They resorted to a deceptive method: to lull the vigilance of the victim in order to use it as far as possible for their aggressive purposes, and then attack him.

The turn in the policy of the Nazis towards Poland corresponded to the plans of the Polish reaction. Although the seizure of power by the fascists in Germany and the encouragement of German aggression by the imperialists of England and France, which was especially confirmed by the signing of the "Pact of Four", created a great threat to Poland, the anti-popular ruling clique of Poland decided to use the new situation in their narrow class interests.

The bourgeois government of Poland pinned great hopes on the seizure of power by the Nazis in Germany. It believed that the long-awaited hour had come for a joint campaign with Germany against

the Soviet Union. Therefore, the ruling clique of Poland rushed headlong into the arms of Nazi Germany.

On May 2, 1933, Hitler, in a conversation with the Polish ambassador Vysotsky, and then on November 15, at a meeting with the new ambassador Lipsky, spoke of Germany's desire to establish "friendly" relations with Poland. Playing on the anti-Soviet aspirations of Poland's ruling circles, Hitler, repeating [189] the words of Churchill and Clemenceau, declared that Poland was an outpost of Europe against Asia, "the guardian of the West against the penetration of communism from the East" {656} .

Soon a message was published on the termination of the German-Polish customs war and a German-Polish economic agreement was signed, which was extremely beneficial for Germany. Its signing took place on the day when Germany announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations. In Geneva, Polish Foreign Minister J. Beck continued behind-the-scenes negotiations with representatives of fascist Germany.

The German-Polish pact (for a period of 10 years) of January 26, 1934, with the official name "Declaration on the non-use of force between Poland and Germany" completed the deal. Both governments declared their desire to "open a new era in political relations between Poland and Germany", pledged "in no case to resort to the use of force in order to resolve disputed issues."

The German-Polish Pact was prepared by the entire previous anti-Soviet policy of the governments of Poland, Britain, France, and the USA, which encouraged Germany to attack the Soviet Union. The pact became one of the major milestones on the road to World War II. The very fact of signing the treaty was beneficial to the German imperialists. It did not even mention the recognition by Germany of the inviolability of its eastern borders, which provided it with the possibility of further provocations against Czechoslovakia and Poland itself. The pact strengthened the internal and international position of German fascism. By announcing the end of the protracted German-Polish conflict, he helped the Nazis create a false impression of their peaceful aspirations and thereby mislead and

weaken the vigilance of the peoples. He nullified the Franco-Polish alliance, weakened the position of France,{657} .

The pact inflicted serious damage on the idea of collective security in Europe and helped Hitler to upset the ranks of its supporters. Germany acquired an ally in the government of Poland, which she used for her aggressive purposes: to undermine the disarmament conference and the League of Nations, to disrupt the measures put forward by the Soviet Union to maintain peace and create a system of collective security, to plan a war against the USSR. In their subversive activities in Europe, the Nazis made extensive use of Pilsud's J. Beck. West German historians write that the pact with Poland "justified itself for Hitler four years later, playing its part in his measures against Austria and Czechoslovakia" {658} .

As early as January 1934, the Soviet Union pointed out the danger of the German-Polish pact both for Poland itself and for peace in Europe. The Izvestia newspaper of November 29, 1934, warned that the pact undermined Poland's alliance with other countries and left "an isolated Poland face to face with fascist Germany. Will the non-aggression pact then be a sufficient basis for peaceful relations between the two countries? Will the question of the Polish-German border and of Polish-German relations in general not arise again, and not only in the diplomatic plane?

However, the Polish government did not heed these well-founded warnings. Disregarding the fundamental national interests [190] of the Polish people and state, the ruling clique of bourgeois-landowner Poland regarded the pact with fascist Germany as a decisive event in preparing for war against the Soviet Union.

In January 1934, Lipsky, the Polish ambassador to Germany, who signed the German-Polish pact on behalf of his government, told the French diplomat Rocha that now "there will never be any talk of any eastern Locarno. We warn Moscow about this. From now on, German expansion changes direction and purpose. We are calm. The fate of Austria and Bohemia no longer interests Poland..." {659} . The reactionary journalist Mackiewicz admitted that the Polish ruling clique viewed this agreement primarily as an anti-Soviet act.

"Hitler's agreement with Poland of January 26, 1934," he wrote, "was the beginning of the German campaign against the Soviet Union with the active participation of Poland, with the neutrality of England and France" {660} .

After the war, Polish fascist emigre publicists tried to argue that in the current international situation of 1934, when England and France signed the "Pact of Four" with Germany and Italy, the Polish government seemed to have no choice but to conclude a pact with Hitler. Being enemies of the Soviet state, they deliberately keep silent about another possibility - rapprochement with the USSR, which would really guarantee the security of Poland. Signed as early as July 25, 1932, the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact could become a real guarantee of Poland's independence. The Soviet Union persistently sought the establishment of friendly relations with Poland and made a number of specific proposals, but all its good intentions ran into a blank wall of anti-Sovietism.

In order to further draw Poland into anti-Soviet actions and use it to undermine security in Europe, the Nazis promised the Polish government territorial gains, especially at the expense of the Soviet Union. During the frequent trips of the leaders of Nazi Germany to Poland, plans for a joint war against the Soviet Union were discussed. The Nazis knew that the proposals for a joint war against the USSR would be approved by the ruling clique in Poland.

The plans for the war against the USSR were most fully and frankly discussed during Goering's visits to Poland in 1935 for the so-called "hunt" in Belovezhskaya Pushcha. The essence of these negotiations is set out in an official note by the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Count Szembek.

"Today I discussed with Mr. Lipsky the question of Goering's visit to Poland," writes Schembek. - The ambassador claimed that during the conversations in Bialowieza and in Warsaw, Goering was very frank. Especially in a conversation with the generals, when he outlined far-reaching plans, hinting at an anti-Russian alliance and a joint attack on Russia. Goering made it clear that under these

conditions Ukraine would become a Polish sphere of influence, and North-Western Russia a German one .

With the fascist dictator Piłsudski and President Mościcki, Goering had an even more frank conversation. He invited Piłsudski to take over the overall command of the combined German-Polish forces in the war against the USSR. The proposal was met with enthusiasm. [191]

Thus, the question of a joint war against the Soviet Union was the basis of the German-Polish alliance and served as the bait with which Hitler managed to use the Polish ruling clique for his own purposes. The Polish government obediently followed in the wake of the policy of Nazi Germany and often even outstripped it in undermining the peace and security of the peoples of Europe.

Precisely because the Polish-German deal dealt a strong blow to the plans for organizing European security, it evoked approval in the ruling circles of the United States, Britain, and even France, who saw in the Polish-German pact a continuation of their own plans for the revival of German militarism and the encouragement of Germany's anti-Soviet policy. The Polish ambassador to the United States, Sokolovsky, reported to Warsaw that Assistant Secretary of State Philippe had expressed great interest and satisfaction in the development of German-Polish relations {662}

The ruling circles of England also pushed Poland to make a deal with Nazi Germany. Counselor of the Polish embassy in London Vselakia reported on his conversation on December 11, 1933 with two directors of departments of the British Foreign Office - Wigram and Kollner, who told him about the identity of the goals of the foreign policy of England and Poland, that the Foreign Office (British Foreign Office) "very well informed" about the Polish-German negotiations and that the British government agrees to put pressure on Lithuania with a view to its "unification with Poland" {663} .

When the pact was signed, British Foreign Secretary Simon asked the Polish ambassador Skirmunt to convey to the Polish government on his own behalf and from the government gratitude on this

occasion. He also said that he had instructed the ambassador in Berlin to bring Hitler the congratulations of the British government {664} .

Despite the fact that the German-Polish pact created a gap in the system of French alliances in Europe, the extreme right circles in France, however, received the German-Polish deal with approval and regarded it as an example for France to follow. On November 25, 1933, the Polish ambassador in Paris, Khlapovsky, reported that "Que d'Orsay (as the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is called after the name of the embankment on which it is located. - Ed.) Is satisfied with the outcome of the German-Polish reconciliation and expresses dissatisfaction only with the fact that that was not informed about the preparation of the final phase of the negotiations" {665} .

The German-Polish pact was also met with approval by the reactionary forces of other countries of the capitalist world. They saw in it a prototype of the future organization of international relations in Europe, an alternative to the policy of peace and the struggle for the creation of a system of collective security offered by progressive forces led by the Soviet Union.

In view of the fact that capitulatory elements were increasingly gaining the upper hand in the ruling circles of the Western powers, the Nazis decided to use the situation to further undermine the Versailles system, and in particular to annex the Saar. And this is understandable. For Hitler's plans for the rearmament of the country, the Saar region with its developed coal and metallurgical base was of great importance. [192]

Through deception, blackmail and terror, the Nazis sought to convince the unemployed in the Saarland that they would be provided with work in Germany. Print, radio, cinema, theaters, mass spectacles, shop windows - everything was used to agitate for the annexation of the Saar to Germany. The results of the Saar plebiscite were influenced by the position of churchmen who called for voting for Nazi Germany.

On the day of the plebiscite, January 13, 1935, armed Gestapo men were on duty at the ballot boxes. Hitler's agitation, terror, as well as the favorable position of England and France ensured the outcome of the plebiscite in favor of Germany. On March 1, the Saarland was annexed to the Reich. This was a major foreign policy success of the Nazis, achieved with the assistance of the governments of England and France. The annexation of the Saarland, an important strategic point on the border with France, strengthened the military and economic potential of Germany and contributed to the strengthening of the fascist regime. Fascist propaganda became even more openly demanding the return of other territories to Germany and the revision of the borders established by the Treaty of Versailles.

The Nazi demands for equality in armaments were supported by the monopolies and governments of a number of imperialist powers {666} . In order to legalize German armaments, international imperialist reaction used the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, which resumed its work in February 1932. Its participants rejected the constructive proposals of the Soviet delegation on general disarmament {667} .

The British government played a particularly unseemly role. It was on his initiative that back in December 1932, at a meeting of five powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, USA, Germany), convened in Geneva, an agreement was reached that Germany would be granted "the right of equality (to armament. - Ed.) in a system that will ensure the safety of all nations" {668} . The agreement effectively freed Germany from compliance with the Treaty of Versailles.

Some historians point out that even in the early 1930s, when France was a stronger military power than Germany, its statesmen did not want to completely oppose the influence of British politics. For fear of setting England against itself, France not only passively watched the rearmament of Germany, but in December 1932 Herriot, under pressure from MacDonald, granted Germany equality in arms, and in 1933 Daladier initialed the four-power pact conceived by MacDonald and Mussolini, which even Reynaud called "the first act of appeasement" {669} .

In the spring of 1933, the British government submitted to the disarmament conference the so-called MacDonald Plan, which provided for an increase in the German army from 100,000 to 200,000 men with a short-term service of soldiers (up to eight months). The plan was also supported by the American government. Feeling the connivance of the Western [193] powers, Germany increased its demands, then, referring to the refusal of the League of Nations to recognize its equal right to arms, on October 14, 1933, announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations and the withdrawal from the disarmament conference.

A new step towards the legalization of German weapons by the governments of the Western powers was made during the Franco-British negotiations in early February 1935. In the official communiqué on the results of the negotiations, a proposal was put forward on the need for cooperation with Germany and the conclusion of a number of agreements, among which the Western Air Convention was the most important ("Air Locarno") with the participation of England, France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium.

Convinced that the Western powers agreed to the legalization of German weapons, the Nazis on March 10, 1935, openly announced the creation of the German air force. But even this violation of the Treaty of Versailles did not disturb the governments of England and France.

The unilateral termination by Germany of the military articles of the Treaty of Versailles meant a violation of one of the most important foundations of the post-war peace settlement. Germany proclaimed that she was moving to an accelerated pace of rearmament, to preparing for war. Such an act dealt a blow to the security of the peoples of Europe. However, Western countries did not resist.

The note of the British government dated March 18, 1935, contained only a ghostly hint of protest. At the same time, the British government announced that it was not postponing Simon's visit to Germany. As E. Kordt, a former adviser at the German embassy in London, admits, "Hitler concluded from this that no more serious opposition should be expected from the British side" {670} .

The French government, which was more sensitive to German rearmament, proposed that the matter be referred to the League of Nations.

The efforts of the Nazis thus received more and more support from the reactionary circles in England, which directed British foreign policy. As Ribbentrop said at the Nuremberg trials, Hitler proceeded from the fact that, "considering the changed situation in Europe and the rapid strengthening of Russia, England now wants to see a strong Germany."

Having received sanction for unlimited armaments from the largest European power, Great Britain, and relying on the help of American monopolies, fascist Germany considered it possible to begin the implementation of its aggressive plans.

Not a few bourgeois scholars ask the question: "How could this happen?" They have in mind the aid of the USA, Britain, and France to Hitlerite Germany. The American historian E. Bennett writes: "Now we have documentary evidence from the German archives, which show the unconditional desire of the government (Hitler. - Ed.) to change the existing order. However, the Allies had evidence of this even then - in the reports of the attache, in speeches in the Reichstag, in the German press. It was not the lack of evidence, but rather the inability to realize their importance» {671} .

Inability or unwillingness? Mistake or crime? It has long been said: the best judge is time. The experience of history, paid for by grief, torment, [194] the blood and lives of many millions of people, irrefutably testifies that the then policy of encouraging fascism on the part of the governments of the Western powers was completely vicious.

The main trends in the development of capitalism after the First World War confirmed the historical correctness and scientific foresight of Lenin's theory of imperialism, its most important proposition that war is rooted in the very essence of the capitalist world.

The reactionary historians of Germany, the USA and England are trying to remove from the agenda of historical science the study of the processes of the origin of war, which involves the disclosure of the deep contradictions of capitalism. An analysis of these contradictions undermines the main basis for the interpretation of the history of the Second World War by falsifiers, who claim that it arose by chance, due to the action of not fundamental, but incidental factors.

The reactionary historians of the FRG {672} strive to refute the indisputable truth that the main driving force in the preparation of the war was the influential circles of German monopoly capital, to hide the interconnection of fascism, its policy and ideology with the entire system of imperialism.

Many bourgeois authors try to present fascism as an extra-class phenomenon that has nothing in common with the big bourgeoisie. E. Nolte in his book "The Age of Fascism" wrote that fascism is defined primarily by "relatively classless appearance" {673} and that it has never been "the main brainchild of the aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie" {674} . To whitewash monopoly capital, Nolte is ready to blame fascism. W. Troye in 1966 argued that only a few industrialists sought to establish contact with Hitler and the Nazi Party {675} and that even before they came to power in Germany, influential groups of Ruhr industrialists were frightened by "Hitlerian totalitarianism" {676} .

However, the documents that became widely known in the post-war period indicate that those who in 1932 signed the letter addressed to Hindenburg transferring power to Hitler stood on the captain's bridge of the German policy that led to the war {677} .

Reactionary historiography seeks in every possible way to discredit the Marxist-Leninist assessment of the essence of fascism and to prove the absence of its organic connection with the main trends in the development of state-monopoly capital, which put the system of capitalist regulation at the service of the Hitlerite totalitarian regime {678} . [195]

The economic origins of the Second World War were laid in the ever-deepening conflict between the social nature of production and the private capitalist form of appropriation, in the uneven development of the capitalist countries, the significant strengthening of various forms of militarism under state-monopoly capitalism, the formation of all-powerful financial and industrial associations that divided the world economically, the aggravation competition in international markets.

Preparations for war found expression in a whole system of economic, scientific, technical, social, and ideological measures in the emerging groupings of the opposing capitalist countries. These measures led to a one-sided development of the economy, an increase in its mobility and military capabilities, a concentration of strategic raw materials and labor in the interests of the arms race, a high degree of subordination of scientific research and development work to military goals, and state financing of monopolies that produced military equipment.

As the factors that led to military conflict matured, significant shifts took place in the socio-political system of the imperialist states, in the alignment and correlation of their internal class forces. The democratic freedoms won by the struggle of the working class were gradually abolished, and a broad offensive was launched against the communist parties and the mass organizations of the working people. Military dictatorial regimes were established in a number of countries, measures were taken to strengthen the social base of militarism and the military, and the state apparatus was subordinated to military-industrial monopolies and military leadership. The more the pace of the military-militarist machine accelerated, the more clearly the tendency to growth of political reaction along all lines was revealed.

It was during this period that fascism, the most dangerous weapon of the most reactionary and militant circles of monopoly capital, appeared at the forefront of history. Fascism became the main counter-revolutionary and anti-democratic force that threatened humanity with the incalculable calamities of a world war.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union on guard of peace

1. Tasks of the foreign policy of the USSR

Soviet foreign policy, born of the Great October Socialist Revolution, was formed, and developed along with the Soviet state, fully responding to its class character. From its first step - the Decree on Peace - it was aimed at strengthening peaceful relations between countries and peoples, supporting revolutionary liberation movements, promoting the objective historical process of the socialist transformation of life on earth.

V. I. Lenin, the founder and creator of the foreign policy of the Soviet state, determined its main course, goals and objectives, strategy, and tactics. From the time of the Great October Socialist Revolution until the end of his life, V. I. Lenin continued to develop the theory of Soviet foreign policy and specifically directed its implementation. Over the years, vast experience has been accumulated, which has become an invaluable asset of the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

The main task of the foreign policy of the USSR is to ensure the most favorable international conditions for peaceful creative work, to strengthen that powerful base for revolutionary transformation and renewal of the world, which is the Soviet Union. The characteristic features, principles, methods, and forms of foreign policy activity of the CPSU and the Soviet government are constantly being improved in the course of the development of the country and the world revolutionary process and are being put into practice.

In determining the foreign policy line of the USSR, the Communist Party proceeds from the fundamental interests of the Soviet people, their internationalist duty. Loyalty to proletarian internationalism—the most important revolutionary principle of the international communist and workers' movement—is a characteristic feature of Soviet policy. This loyalty is manifested in all the activities of the Soviet people in building a new society, which is making an invaluable contribution to the world revolutionary process, in the Soviet Union's unfailing support for the liberation movement of the peoples of the world. The foreign policy of the USSR combines strict

observance of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states with comprehensive assistance to the revolutionary forces, the socialist and national liberation movements.

One of the foundations of Soviet foreign policy throughout its history is the Leninist principle of the peaceful coexistence of states [273] with different social systems, which is based on the fact that there are states on the globe with different social and state systems. Objective reality itself strongly dictates to all states the need to live in peace and cooperation, to resolve the most complex and difficult issues of mutual relations through negotiations and harmonization of points of view, without war.

The policy of peaceful coexistence presupposes an effective rebuff to imperialist aggression and support for the peoples fighting against foreign domination for their freedom and independence. It opposes various imperialist theories of world domination, the superiority of some races and nations over others, and proceeds from the fact that the interests of the world require respect for the sovereign rights, honor, and dignity of every people. The peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems is a specific form of the class struggle between socialism and capitalism on a world scale. It does not extend to class relations within exploiting states, nor to the realm of ideology; peaceful coexistence of bourgeois ideology with socialist ideology is impossible.

The foreign policy of the USSR played an important role in the victory of the army of the young republic over the foreign interventionists and the White Guards. V. I. Lenin said: "We carried out the war for peace with extraordinary energy. This war is producing excellent results. In this field of struggle we showed ourselves best of all, in any case no worse than in the field of activity of the Red Army..." {868}

After the end of the civil war and foreign military intervention, the task of Soviet foreign policy was to turn a peaceful respite into a long period of coexistence, to provide the necessary external conditions for building socialism.

The main direction of the acute struggle that unfolded on the world stage was the desire of the enemies of socialism to create a united anti-Soviet front for the war against the USSR, in which Germany was assigned the role of a strike force. Soviet foreign policy, directed by V. I. Lenin, his disciples, and followers, tirelessly waged a struggle against such plans. For 12 years (1918-1930) the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was headed by a talented diplomat of the Leninist school GV Chicherin. On the 100th anniversary of his birth, Pravda wrote that he "consistently implemented the Leninist principles of foreign policy and made a significant contribution to defending the gains of the proletarian revolution in our country, to ensuring the peace and security of the Soviet state ... Being a widely educated person, he devoted a lot of energy to scientific work,{869}.

One of the objective foundations of success in the struggle of the Soviet Union against the imperialist conspiracy was the contradictions between its possible participants. The ruling classes of Germany were interested in postponing the conflict with the USSR and in developing economic ties with it. During the Locarno negotiations between the USSR and Germany, a trade and economic agreement was signed. Given the persistent warnings of Soviet diplomacy that Germany's accession to the League of Nations due to the 16th article of its charter {870} could lead to a deterioration in relations [274]with the USSR, the representatives of Germany declared in Locarno that they did not consider it possible to unconditionally accept the obligations arising from this article. On April 24, 1926, as a result of the peace-loving efforts of the USSR, a non-aggression and neutrality pact was signed between the Soviet Union and Germany. He ruled out Germany's participation in anti-Soviet actions, blunting the edge of the Locarno Treaty directed against the USSR. The conclusion of the treaty with Germany was a major victory for the peace-loving policy of the Soviet state.

In 1925-1927. The Soviet Union concluded non-aggression and neutrality pacts with Afghanistan, Lithuania, Iran, and Turkey.

The British conservatives underestimated the significance of the peace-loving steps of the Soviet government. They believed that a sufficient basis had been created in Locarno for a new anti-Soviet

military intervention. Their hatred was aggravated by the international revolutionary influence of the Land of Soviets. Great strikes of workers shook England, and the liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies expanded. Armed popular uprisings broke out in Indonesia, Syria, and Morocco. Since 1924, a civil war has been going on in China.

Soviet diplomacy successfully resisted the efforts of the British government, which tried to involve Germany and France in the anti-Soviet adventure. The industrialists of these countries received large Soviet orders that had previously been placed in England. In negotiations with the German government, G. Chicherin received assurances that it would maintain good neighborly relations with the USSR, would not join England, and would make efforts to preserve peace. The German government made such promises, considering it unprofitable for itself to participate in the anti-Soviet adventure organized by British reaction.

French Foreign Minister Briand called for the 10th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I to be marked with a Franco-American declaration to renounce war as a means of foreign policy. US Secretary of State Kellogg proposed making this declaration multilateral. But the Soviet Union was excluded from the number of states that were supposed to sign this document, which turned the Briand-Kellogg Pact into an integral part of the encirclement policy and the preparation of intervention against the USSR. At the signing of the pact, held in Paris on August 27, 1928, the reservations of some bourgeois governments negated their obligations to renounce war. The British government declared that the pact did not extend to areas on which the welfare and security of England depended.

In a statement regarding the forthcoming conclusion of the pact, the Soviet government pointed out that the isolation of the USSR testifies to the hostile intentions of its initiators. At the same time, it expressed its readiness to join the pact. The French government had to invite the USSR to participate in it. By accepting the invitation, the Soviet government expressed its disagreement with the reservations of the other participants in the pact and made its "reservation" that it would not recognize any exceptions to the treaty and would

consider any war, declared or undeclared, a violation of it. However, the governments of the capitalist powers were in no hurry to ratify it. The Soviet Union initiated an agreement on early entry into force of the pact. Such a protocol was signed by the USSR, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania, Turkey, Iran, and Lithuania joined it.

Considering disarmament an important factor in ensuring peace, in 1927 the Soviet Union proposed to the Preparatory Commission of the World Conference on Disarmament a constructive plan for general and complete disarmament. This put the imperialist organizers of the conference, [275]convened solely to deceive public opinion, into a difficult position. They did not want real disarmament, but they could not expose themselves by rejecting the Soviet proposals. Experienced bourgeois diplomacy found a way out: the assertion was put forward that the Soviet plan for general and complete disarmament went beyond the agenda of a future conference, the task of which was reduced only to limiting armaments. Then the Soviet delegation introduced a realistic plan for progressively proportional partial disarmament. But the representatives of the imperialist powers reacted negatively to him too.

The anti-Soviet provocations in the Far East failed. In the summer of 1929, the Kuomintang seized the Chinese Eastern Railway (belonging to the Soviet Union), its Soviet personnel were replaced by White Guards, and mass arrests of citizens of the USSR were made. Detachments of White Guards and Chiang Kai-shek invaded the territory of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government was forced to fight back. In November 1929, units of the Special Far Eastern Army defeated the troops of Chinese militarists who were rampaging on the Soviet borders.

Soviet foreign policy played an important role in frustrating plans for armed intervention against the USSR. In 1929 the British government, whose aggressive intentions were not supported by other governments, restored diplomatic relations with the USSR.

With the onset of the world economic crisis, the imperialists, especially the French, again returned to plans for a military

campaign against the USSR. This led to the deterioration of relations between France and the USSR. Soviet orders placed in France were curtailed. Since the loss of the Soviet market became especially sensitive during the economic crisis, the French government had to change its attitude towards the USSR. The main reason for France's emerging turn towards rapprochement with the Soviet Union was the revival of German revanchism, which posed a direct threat to it.

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks attached paramount importance to non-aggression and neutrality treaties and suggested that the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs continue the course towards signing such treaties. In particular, the Politburo of the Central Committee instructed the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to seek the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Poland.

In 1932-1933. The system of Soviet non-aggression and neutrality pacts has expanded significantly. It included agreements with Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, France, and Italy.

Thus, in the difficult struggle against imperialist provocations, the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence achieved serious successes in the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s. It fulfilled its main task - it helped to ensure a relatively long peaceful respite, necessary for the creative work of the people, for building socialism.

2. Measures taken by the USSR to create a system of collective security

Japan's attack on Manchuria in 1931 and the seizure of power by the Nazis in Germany in 1933 created a new international situation characterized by rapid developments on the way to a new world war. In this situation, Soviet foreign policy, despite the soothing speeches of the leaders of the capitalist countries {871} gave a completely [276] accurate assessment of the military danger and called for an expansion of the struggle to preserve peace.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government closely followed the dangerous course of events in the Far East. Contrary to the League of Nations, which considered Japanese aggression as a

private episode that did not pose a threat to peace, Soviet foreign policy assessed Japan's attack on Manchuria as the beginning of a big war, and not only against China. On February 11, 1932, the head of the Soviet delegation, MM Litvinov, at the plenary session of the conference on the reduction and limitation of armaments, said the following about this: "Where is the optimist who can conscientiously assert that the military operations begun will be limited to only two countries or only one mainland?" {872}

The danger of expanding the scale of the war was also evidenced by the continuous provocations of the Japanese military on the Soviet Far Eastern borders. Suppressing them, the government of the USSR continued to strengthen the defense of the Far East and, using the means of diplomacy, sought to improve relations with Japan. On December 23, 1931, these measures were discussed by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. For the further development of measures to reduce the military danger in the Far East, by decision of the Politburo, a commission consisting of I. V. Stalin, K. E. Voroshilov and G. K. Ordzhonikidze was created.

The Soviet government began to carry out appropriate foreign policy actions. In a note dated January 4, 1933, the government of the USSR expressed regret over the refusal of the Japanese government to conclude a bilateral non-aggression pact and stated that the Soviet side was confident that there were no disputes between the USSR and Japan that could not be resolved peacefully {873} . The position of the Japanese government confirmed his aggressiveness.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government foresaw the possibility of the Nazis seizing power in Germany and the associated threat to world peace and the security of peoples. This was discussed in the summer of 1930 at the 16th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks {874} . The Western press assured of the unfoundedness of such forecasts, since the "democratic system" of Germany allegedly ruled out the fascist danger. However, less than three years later, it became clear that bourgeois democracy in Germany had played the role of a screen

under which fascism broke through to power and destroyed the last remnants of democracy.

After the fascist coup in Germany, the Soviet Union led the forces that actively opposed the aggressive program of the new government of that country. The threat of a world war emanating from Germany was warned by Soviet representatives at all international forums, the press reported, and USSR diplomacy resolutely fought for peace. The Soviet government made vigorous protests to the Hitlerite government both against the atrocities against the institutions and individual citizens of the USSR, and against the anti-Soviet slander of the fascist leaders. Hitler's speech at the Berlin Sports Palace on March 2, 1933, was characterized in one of the protests as "containing unheard-of sharp attacks" on the Soviet Union, its offensiveness was recognized as contrary to the existing relations between the USSR and Germany [875] .

At the International Economic Conference, held in the summer of 1933 in London, as well as at the conference on disarmament, the Soviet [277]the delegates, condemning the speeches of the German representatives, revealed the true face of fascism and its designs. The delegation of Nazi Germany at the International Economic Conference came up with a memorandum in the spirit of fascist bandit ideology. It demanded that "a people without space" be placed at the disposal of "new territories where this energetic race could establish colonies and carry out great peaceful works." Further, it was transparently hinted that such lands could be obtained at the expense of Russia, where the revolution allegedly led to a destructive process that it was time to stop. The memorandum was evaluated by Soviet foreign policy - both at the meetings of the conference and in a note to the German government - as a direct "call for war against the USSR" [876] .

In a note of protest dated June 22, 1933, attention was drawn to the fact that such actions of the Hitlerite government not only contradicted the existing contractual good-neighborly relations between the USSR and Germany, but were a direct violation of them. When it was handed over, the Soviet plenipotentiary in Germany remarked: "... there are persons in the ruling Nazi party ... who still

harbor the illusions of the division of the USSR and expansion at the expense of the USSR ..." {877} He, in particular, had in mind An interview with Hitler, published on May 5, 1933, by the British newspaper The Daily Telegraph, declaring that Germany would be entirely occupied with the search for "living space" in the east of Europe. At that time, such assurances were given by the Nazi leaders left and right in order to calm public opinion in the West and enlist the support of other imperialist governments.

The Soviet Union also paid attention to the ever-increasing militarization of Germany. In November 1933, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR made the following statement: "Not only has the hostile arms race been renewed and intensified, but—and this is perhaps even more serious—the younger generation is being educated on the idealization of war. Characteristic of such a militaristic upbringing is the proclamation of medieval pseudo-scientific theories about the superiority of some peoples over others and the right of some peoples to rule over others and even exterminate them" {878} . The danger posed by fascism to the peoples was emphasized by the 17th Congress of the CPSU(b). The Report of the Central Committee stated:

"Chauvinism and the preparation for war as the basic elements of foreign policy, the curbing of the working class and terror in the field of domestic policy as a necessary means for strengthening the rear of future military fronts—this is what is now particularly occupied by contemporary imperialist politicians.

No wonder that fascism has now become the most fashionable commodity among militant bourgeois politicians .

In a conversation with the German ambassador to the USSR, Nadolny, on March 28, 1934, the Soviet side stated that "the German ruling party has armed intervention against the Soviet Union in its program and has not yet abandoned this clause of its catechism" {880} . The participation in the conversation of the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs of the USSR K. E. Voroshilov gave it the significance of the most serious warning.

The resolute position of the Soviet Union in relation to the plans of the German fascist and Japanese aggression encouraged the freedom-loving peoples, [278] while complicity with the invaders on the part of the ruling circles of the USA, Britain and France inspired the greatest fears for the fate of mankind. Everyday facts convinced the governments and peoples of many countries that only a socialist state strives to preserve peace and the independence of peoples, to put an end to Nazi and Japanese harassment against other states.

The Soviet Union was gaining ever-increasing prestige in world affairs; it was no longer possible to ignore it. This, as well as the desire, together with the USSR, to counteract Nazi and Japanese aggression, determined the second (after 1924) period of establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, which was characteristic of 1933-1934. Among the states that established diplomatic relations with the USSR at that time were Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Spain, Romania, the USA, and Czechoslovakia. In 1935, Belgium, Colombia, and Luxembourg were added to them.

The US government was forced to reconsider its policy of non-recognition of the USSR for many reasons: the strengthening of the power and the growth of the international prestige of the Soviet state, the interest of US business circles in developing trade relations with it, the serious fears of US ruling circles in connection with Japanese plans to establish dominance in the Pacific Ocean, characteristic of F. Roosevelt's government realism, a broad movement in the United States for the recognition of the Soviet Union, and others.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the USA testified to the complete failure of the policy of non-recognition pursued by the American government for sixteen years. Even on the eve of the establishment of diplomatic relations, such a possibility was categorically denied by many leading figures of the overseas country. When US Secretary of State G. Stimson was advised in 1932 to meet with a Soviet delegate, he "assumed an indignantly solemn air, raised his hands to the sky and exclaimed: "Never, never! Centuries will pass, but America will not recognize the Soviet Union."

The new Secretary of State, K. Hull, did not directly oppose the establishment of diplomatic relations, but put forward conditions that would make them impossible. In his memoirs, he wrote that the recognition of the USSR brought him gloomy thoughts and painful experiences. As a result, he submitted his memorandum to the president, listing a whole list of claims, recommending that they be presented to the Soviet Union and demanding that "every means at our disposal be used to put pressure on the Soviet government in order to satisfactorily resolve the existing problems" {881} .

The development of various claims against the Soviet Union was occupied by Kelly, who was considered in the United States a recognized "expert on Russian affairs." During the years of the American armed intervention against Soviet Russia and in subsequent times, he gave the US President "recommendations". As head of the Eastern Division of the State Department, Kelly drafted a memorandum marked by particular hostility towards the USSR. This "expert" recommended that the following conditions be put forward for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union: the USSR government's renunciation of "international communist activities", the payment of debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments, the recognition of the property and capital of the Americans that belonged to them in tsarist Russia and nationalized by the Soviet government.

Many monopolists were interested in establishing diplomatic relations with the USSR, counting on the sale of goods on the Soviet [279] market. In the words of an American bourgeois historian, it was they who, in 1930, "were the first to call for a revision of the thirteen-year government policy of non-recognition" {882} .

An equally important circumstance that contributed to the establishment of diplomatic relations by the United States with the USSR was the aggravation of US-Japanese imperialist contradictions and the resulting desire of the US ruling circles to create "the greatest counterbalance to the growing power of Japan" {883} . The well-known American journalist W. Lippman wrote: "Recognition has many advantages. The great power of Russia lies between two dangerous centers of the modern world: East Asia and Central

Europe" {884}. The New York Times on October 21, 1933, spoke more specifically: "The Soviet Union represents a barrier against the aggression of militaristic Japan on one continent and Hitlerite Germany on the other." Life itself forced even the reactionary press to recognize the enormous significance of the peace-loving policy of the USSR. But there was something else behind this: the desire to pit the Soviet Union against Japan and Germany so that the United States of America would find itself in the position of a third party, outside the armed conflict, but deriving all the benefits from it.

On October 10, 1933, President Roosevelt addressed the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, M. I. Kalinin, with a proposal to eliminate the difficulties associated with the absence of Soviet-American diplomatic relations by "frank friendly conversations." In response to M. I. Kalinin, it was noted that the abnormal situation, which the president had in mind, "has an unfavorable effect not only on the interests of the two states concerned, but also on the general international situation, increasing the elements of unrest, complicating the process of consolidating world peace and encouraging forces, directed to the destruction of this world" {885} .

Subsequent negotiations were short-lived. On November 16, 1933, the United States and the USSR exchanged notes on the establishment of diplomatic relations, on propaganda, on religious issues, on legal protection of citizens, and on court cases. Both governments pledged to adhere to the principle of non-interference in each other's affairs, to strictly refrain from initiating or encouraging armed intervention, not to allow the establishment or presence on their territory of any organization or group that encroaches on the territorial integrity of another country, and also not to subsidize, support or not to allow the creation of military organizations or groups with the aim of armed struggle against the other side, striving for a violent change in its political and social system {886} .

The notes removed all the obstacles that hindered the development of normal relations between the two countries. The note to the US government stated that the Soviet government had renounced

claims for compensation for damage caused by the actions of US military forces in Siberia {887} .

M. I. Kalinin, in an address to the American people (it was broadcast over the radio), emphasized that the Soviet people see in diverse and fruitful cooperation with the people of the USA the possibility of preserving [280] and strengthening peace, which is the most important condition for ensuring technical progress and the well-being of people { 888} .

However, the forces that opposed the development of friendly Soviet-American relations remained fairly influential in the United States. Under their pressure, one of his inveterate opponents, V. Bullitt, was appointed the first American ambassador to the USSR. Documents emanating from him, partially published in American official publications, testify to the activities hostile to the USSR, which the US ambassador launched. In one of his reports to the State Department, Bullitt expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would "become the object of attack from Europe and the Far East," as a result of which it could not become the greatest power in the world. "If," the ambassador wrote, "a war breaks out between Japan and the Soviet Union, we must not interfere, but must use our influence and our strength by the end of the war,{889}.

Bullitt proposed to his government that Soviet citizens should be subject to a special humiliating procedure for obtaining visas to visit the United States. It was necessary, he demanded, "to refuse visas to all Soviet citizens, unless they present completely satisfactory evidence that they were not and are not members of the Communist Party" {890} . If such a proposal were accepted, then the conditions under which the establishment of Soviet-American diplomatic relations took place would be undermined. Bullitt did just that. At the time when the 7th Congress of the Comintern was taking place in Moscow, he advised his government to pursue in the future a policy of balancing on the verge of breaking diplomatic relations between the USA and the USSR {891} .

In contrast to the American reactionaries, the Soviet Union, in the interests of peace, sought to improve relations with the United

States, which was clearly stated in M. I. Kalinin's address to the American people.

In the struggle of the USSR for peace, non-aggression and neutrality treaties were of great importance, which were one of the constructive elements of its foreign policy. The Soviet-German Treaty of Non-Aggression and Neutrality, signed on April 24, 1926, for a period of five years, was extended on June 24, 1931, without limitation by any period. The extension protocol stated that each of the parties "has the right at any time, but not earlier than June 30, 1933, with one year's notice, to denounce this Treaty" [892]. The ratification of the protocol was delayed through the fault of the German government, which was reflected in the growing anti-Soviet aspirations of the ruling circles of Germany. But even the Hitlerite clique tried to disguise their military plans against the USSR. Soviet diplomacy, having spent a lot of work, achieved the entry into force of the protocol; its ratification took place in April-May 1933, after the Nazis seized power in Germany. Thus, our country had the obligation of the Hitlerite government to refrain from attack and to remain neutral if such an attack on the Soviet Union was undertaken by third powers, more than six years before the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact on August 23, 1939. [281]

The measures taken by the USSR contributed to the preservation of peace in the 1920s and early 1930s. But with the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, they became insufficient to solve this problem. The aggressor could not be stopped by non-aggression treaties alone; it was necessary to oppose him with a united front of peace-loving forces and to prevent the unleashing of war by the combined efforts of many countries and peoples. This is how a new constructive idea of Soviet foreign policy appeared - the idea of collective security. It arose from the fact that in matters of war and peace the globe is indivisible. V. I. Lenin pointed out that any imperialist aggression, even a local one, affects the interests of so many countries and peoples that the development of events leads to an expansion of the war, in the context of the close interweaving of economic, financial, and political ties between states.

A number of measures aimed at creating a system of collective security were undertaken even before the new idea was expressed in a special decision of the Central Committee of the AUCP(b).

At the plenary session of the conference on the reduction and limitation of armaments in February 1932, the head of the Soviet delegation, MM Litvinov, on behalf of his government, proposed to develop effective guarantees against war. One of them could be general and complete disarmament. The Soviet delegation, having no illusions about the fate of such a proposal, agreed to "discuss any proposals in the direction of reducing armaments ..." {893}

On February 6, 1933, at a meeting of the General Commission of this conference, the Soviet Union proposed the adoption of a declaration on the definition of aggression. The purpose of the proposal was to give the concept of "aggression" a very definite interpretation. Previously, there was no such generally accepted definition in international practice.

The Soviet Union put forward a truly scientific definition of aggression that left no room for its justification. In the Soviet draft, it was proposed to consider as an aggressor a state that would declare war on another or invade foreign territory without declaring it, take military action on land, sea or in the air. Particular attention was paid to the exposure of camouflaged aggression, as well as the motives by which the aggressors are trying to justify their actions. The draft declaration stated: "No considerations of a political, strategic, or economic nature, including the desire to exploit in the territory of the attacked state the natural wealth or to obtain any kind of other benefits or privileges, nor reference to a significant amount of capital invested or to other special interests in one or another country {894}.

The Security Committee of the Conference on Disarmament adopted the Soviet proposal on the definition of aggression. At a meeting of the General Commission of the Conference on Disarmament, approval of the Soviet initiative was expressed. The British representative A. Eden hastened to speak out against any definition of aggression, declaring that it was allegedly impossible to establish

the existence of aggression. He was supported by the American delegate Gibson. In a report to the State Department, he stated his position: "I was not in the mood to make any statement on [282]this issue. But when, in the course of the ensuing discussion, the predominance of sentiments in favor of the adoption of the corresponding definition was revealed, I considered it necessary to raise some questions without hesitation, since the English delegate clearly stated his government's unwillingness to accept the definition (aggression. - Ed.) " {895} . The obstructionist line of the representatives of Britain and the United States of America led the General Commission to postpone the decision of this question for an indefinite period.

The British government, wishing to undermine the authority of the Soviet Union, which had grown considerably stronger during the conference, resorted to its usual method of aggravating relations. On the morning of April 19, 1933, the plenipotentiary of the USSR in London was handed the text of a royal decree banning the import of Soviet goods into England. A few months later, this act hostile to the USSR was canceled, but it had a negative impact on relations between the two countries.

The provocative actions of the British government did not weaken the firm determination of Soviet diplomacy to seek the implementation of the principles of the declaration on the definition of aggression. The path of concluding appropriate agreements with other states was chosen. In 1933-1934. The USSR signed conventions on the definition of aggression with Afghanistan, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Turkey, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Yugoslavia. Since then, international law has been practically guided by it, although formally it was accepted only by a part of the states of the globe. This determination was one of the guiding principles for determining the guilt of major German war criminals at the Nuremberg Trials in 1946. US Chief Prosecutor Jackson, in his opening speech, said, that the question of the definition of aggression "is nothing new, and there are already well-established and legitimate opinions on this subject." He called the

Soviet convention "one of the most authoritative sources of international law on the subject..."{896}.

On October 14, 1933, Germany left the disarmament conference and on October 19 withdrew from the League of Nations. The representatives of the imperialist states took advantage of this to curtail the work of the conference. The Soviet Union submitted a proposal to turn it into a permanent organ for the defense of peace. Most of the participants rejected the offer, which was in the hands of Germany.

The aggressiveness of fascist Germany more and more acquired a clear anti-Soviet orientation. In the autumn of 1933, Hitler declared that "the restoration of German-Russian relations (in the spirit of Rapallo - Ed.) would be impossible" {897} .

In the face of the growing threat from Germany, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks developed the idea of collective security, set out in its decree of December 12, 1933, No.

The resolution provided for the possibility of the Soviet Union joining the League of Nations and concluding regional agreements with a wide range of European states on mutual protection against aggression. The system of collective security, proposed for the first time in the history of international relations by the Communist Party and the Soviet government, was intended to be an effective means of preventing war and ensuring peace. It met the interests of all freedom-loving peoples who were threatened by fascist aggression.

The coincidence of interests of the champions of national independence and freedom was the first most important objective prerequisite, which determined the possibility of creating a system of collective security. The second was that the Soviet state had grown so economically, so strengthened its international positions and authority, that a real opportunity arose to move from separate non-aggression treaties to the struggle for the creation of a European system for ensuring the peace and security of peoples.

Fulfilling the decision of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of December 12, 1933, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs developed proposals for the creation of a European system of collective security, "approved by the authority on December 19, 1933" {898} . These proposals included the following:

1. The USSR agrees, under certain conditions, to join the League of Nations.
2. The USSR does not object to the conclusion within the framework of the League of Nations of a regional agreement on mutual protection against aggression from Germany.
3. The USSR agrees to the participation in this agreement of Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland, or some of these countries, but with the obligatory participation of France and Poland.
4. Negotiations on clarifying the obligations of a future convention on mutual protection can begin upon the submission by France, which is the initiator of the whole affair, of a draft agreement.
5. Regardless of the obligations under the agreement on mutual defense, the parties to the agreement must undertake to provide each other with diplomatic, moral and, if possible, material assistance, also in cases of military attack not provided for by the agreement itself, and also to influence their press accordingly" {899}

The aggressive aspirations of the Nazis created a real danger for all countries of Eastern and North-Eastern Europe. The Soviet government considered it its duty to help strengthen their security, especially since the threat to them from Germany was also a threat to the Soviet Union. On December 14, 1933, the government of the USSR sent a draft joint declaration to the government of Poland. It was proposed that both states declare "their firm determination to guard and defend peace in the east of Europe", jointly defend "the inviolability and complete economic and political independence of the countries ... separated from the former Russian Empire ..." {900} .

Thus, the Soviet government extended a friendly hand to Poland, proposing joint action to ensure peace and security.

The answer to the Soviet proposal was that the Polish government "considers it possible in principle to make this declaration at the appropriate occasion" {901} . The answer was twofold. The Polish government had already made a choice: it preferred to take the path of anti-Soviet collusion with Hitler's Germany, whose policy posed a great danger to Poland's independence.

The Polish capitalists and landlords, blinded by the pernicious ideas of "great power", thought of plundering and subjugating Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus, seriously fancied themselves "masters of the destinies" of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. Such plans and such a policy were a real godsend for the Nazis. The German government, plotting the destruction of the Polish state and its population, [284] assured its leaders that it needed a "strong Poland" to fight against the USSR, and "Poland and Germany together represent a force that would be difficult to resist in Europe", and precisely it is capable of pushing the Soviet Union "far to the east" {902}. Intoxicated by such prospects, the Pilsud ministers, and above all Foreign Minister Beck, became Hitler's zealous salesmen in Europe {903} . Their role was revealed in early 1934, when Beck made a trip to Tallinn and Riga to persuade the governments of Estonia and Latvia not to agree to a joint defense of the security of Eastern Europe with the USSR.

At the beginning of February 1934, Poland announced its refusal to participate in any declaration with the Soviet Union aimed at guaranteeing the independence of the Baltic countries. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR told Vek, and then the Polish ambassador Lukasiewicz, that the Soviet Union considered the German-Polish treaty as a very dangerous step for the Eastern European countries {904} .

The government of the USSR reacted with attention to the proposal of the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Titulescu, who, on the basis of the Soviet idea of collective security, developed a plan for such an agreement between the USSR, Poland, and Romania, which

provided that in the event of an attack by one of these states on another, the third would provide assistance to the attacked { 905} . However, this plan was not implemented: it did not take into account the internal situation of Romania, where fascist elements were strengthening, and was incompatible with the Romanian-Polish alliance directed against the USSR.

Czechoslovakia, which was part of this bloc, had a great influence on the policy of the countries of the Little Entente. Its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Beneš, did not try to oppose the Nazi aggression and even the seizure of Austria, which was especially dangerous for Czechoslovakia, about which Beneš openly spoke to the representative of the USSR {906} .

The defiant actions of the German militarists gave rise to growing anxiety in the French public, which understood that the plans of the Nazis posed the greatest danger to France. Some of its politicians sought to strengthen relations with the Soviet Union, the main peace-loving force that opposed the Nazi plans for world domination. The exponents of this trend were the former French Prime Minister E. Herriot, the Minister of Aviation P. Cote, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Paul-Boncourt also leaned in her direction.

In the conversations of M. M. Litvinov and the Plenipotentiary of the USSR in France V. S. Dovgalevsky with Paul-Boncourt, the idea gradually emerged to supplement the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact with obligations of mutual assistance against aggression {907} .

On December 28, 1933, an important conversation took place between Dovgalevsky and Paul-Boncourt. The negotiations were encouraging, although Paul-Boncourt did not agree with the Soviet proposals on everything. It seemed that the USSR and France would be able to embark on the path of collective measures to protect peace. During the talks, the French Foreign Minister solemnly declared to the Soviet plenipotentiary: "You and I are embarking on a matter of great importance, we have begun to make history today" {908} . [285]

But the words were not followed by corresponding actions. Through the fault of the French government, negotiations on a mutual assistance pact were delayed for four months. The delay was not accidental. The course towards Franco-Soviet cooperation against aggression ran into the opposite trend - anti-Soviet collusion with Germany. He was actively supported by French politicians and diplomats associated with the largest metallurgical and chemical monopolies, who were interested in making big profits from the rearmament of Germany and were guided by anti-Soviet aspirations.

All these months, French diplomats, primarily Ambassador to Germany A. Francois-Poncet, groped for the possibility of collusion with the Nazis. The ambassador had visited Hitler twice before: on November 24 and December 11, 1933, the head of the German fascists shared with his interlocutor plans for an aggressive war against the USSR. He made no secret of his intentions to establish German priority in Europe.

In April 1934, the leading French politicians realized how illusory their hopes were to enter into an agreement with Germany and in this way eliminate the threat from her side. On April 20, 1934, Foreign Minister L. Barthou told the USSR Charge d'Affaires ad interim that his government intended to continue negotiations in the spirit of Paul-Bonkour's position {909}. Of course, the influence of Barthou and the minister of the new cabinet, E. Herriot, had an effect. They were supporters of the traditional French policy, which was afraid of the revival of the industrial and military power of Germany (especially in the context of the existence of a fascist government in it) and did not trust the British policy of "balance of power" with its invariable desire to play on the Franco-German contradictions. Considering it absolutely necessary to pursue an independent foreign policy that would meet the national interests of France, Barthou moved closer to the socialist state. But, having made such a decision, he did not want to abandon the system of relations between the states of Western Europe, established by the agreement in Locarno in 1925. That is why Barthou informed the rest of the participants in the Locarno system about his negotiations with representatives of the Soviet Union,{910}.

The Franco-Soviet negotiations, which took place in May-June 1934, were given special importance, so they were conducted directly by the foreign ministers of the two states. The French proposals were considered in detail, reflecting France's dual orientation: towards rapprochement with the USSR and the preservation of the Locarno system. Showing great flexibility, Soviet diplomacy found a way to combine both aspects of French policy. Instead of a single treaty of a number of countries, a Soviet-French plan was put forward for concluding two treaties. The first treaty, the so-called Eastern Pact, was supposed to cover the states of Eastern Europe as well as Germany (see Map 6). The parties to the pact mutually guarantee the inviolability of the borders and undertake to render assistance to those of them who are attacked by the aggressor. The second treaty, between France and the USSR, will contain obligations for mutual assistance against aggression. The Soviet Union will assume such obligations towards France as if it were participating in the Locarno system, and France - obligations towards the Soviet Union, as if it were a party to the Eastern Pact. The entry of the USSR into the League of Nations was also envisaged.[286]

Soviet diplomacy considered it expedient for Germany to participate in the Eastern Pact, since the obligations imposed by it would bind her. The desire of the French side to involve the Baltic states in the Eastern Pact met with support in the Soviet Union. In the final draft, Poland, the USSR, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania {911} were named as participants in the Eastern Pact . Romania, having rejected the Soviet and French proposals, refused to participate in the {912} pact.

The elimination of the anti-Soviet orientation of the Locarno treaty and its transformation into a peace pact would be of great positive significance. The very idea of the Eastern Pact was based on the might of the Soviet Union, a dependable guardian of peace. Recognizing this and substantiating the reality of the plan, Barthou said: "Our small allies in the center of Europe must be prepared to regard Russia as a bulwark against Germany..." {913}

The public of a number of Eastern European countries recognized the role of the Soviet Union as a support against the harassment of

German fascism. Influenced by this opinion, the governments of Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania expressed their consent to participate in the Eastern Pact. The governments of Germany and Poland, having found a common language with the government of England, opposed its conclusion.

The leaders of Nazi Germany immediately realized that the Eastern Pact could fetter their aggressive aspirations, but they did not dare to oppose it directly. Therefore, they made an attempt to force the countries of Eastern Europe to reject the idea of a pact. Diplomats from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were invited one by one to the German Foreign Office, where they were instilled with the idea that the Eastern Pact was not in the interests of their states. The French ambassador in Berlin informed the Soviet embassy {914} about this .

Not limited to such conversations, the German government sent a note to France objecting to the pact. The main ones were as follows: Germany cannot agree to a treaty until it enjoys equal "rights" to armaments with its other participants. It put forward a purely casuistic "argument": "The best means of securing peace is not to oppose war to war, but to expand and strengthen the means that exclude the possibility of unleashing war" {915} .

Rejecting the unification of all peace-loving forces as a means of counteracting the war, the Nazis sought to ensure that the response to their aggression was not a rebuff, but capitulation. This was the hidden meaning of their objections. In their circle they were frank. At a conference of "leaders of political organizations, district organizations and commanding staff of the SA and SS" on February 18, 1935, Gruppenfuehrer Schaub said: "Our refusal to sign the Eastern Pact remains firm and unchanged. The Führer would rather cut off his own hand than sign an act limiting Germany's just and historically legitimate claims in the Baltics and go to the refusal of the German nation from its historical mission in the East. {916} .

The Nazi leaders assigned an important role to Poland in the struggle against collective security, and the then Polish government willingly took on such a shameful mission. Fulfilling the directives

of his [287] minister, the French ambassador in Warsaw, Laroche, negotiated the Eastern Pact with Beck, informing the Soviet plenipotentiary V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko about their progress. In February 1934, even before the French government had developed its plans, Laroche announced that Poland would go along with Germany, with whose policy she had associated herself {917} . On July 17, Laroche told the USSR plenipotentiary about his conversation with Beck. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs made it clear to the French Ambassador that he was against the Eastern Pact, since "Poland, as a matter of fact, does not need such a pact" {918}. Soon the Polish government declared that the very idea of the pact was not feasible, since the Soviet Union was not a member of the League of Nations. And when the question of admitting the USSR to the League of Nations was on the agenda, the Polish government tried to prevent this by continuing its anti-Soviet intrigues.

The British government, supporting Hitler's anti-Soviet plans in every possible way, reacted to the idea of the Eastern Pact with obvious disapproval. But the British leaders decided not to act openly. Therefore, during negotiations with Barthou in London on July 9-10, 1934, Simon, the British Foreign Minister, stated that, under certain conditions, his government could support the proposal for such a pact. As one of the conditions, Simon put forward the consent of France to the rearmament of Germany, in other words, he used the argument that the Hitler government had already put forward {919} . Barthou objected to the attempt to turn the idea of the Eastern Pact not against the aggressor, but to his advantage. He even threatened Simon that France could agree to a military alliance with the USSR without the Eastern Pact {920}. Nevertheless, Barthou was forced to agree to include in the communiqué on the results of the Anglo-French negotiations the following provision: both governments agree to the resumption of "negotiations on the conclusion of a convention allowing, in the field of armaments, the reasonable application of the principle of equality in respect of Germany in conditions of security of all nations" {921} .

Soon the British government announced to the governments of Italy, Poland, and Germany that it supported the draft Eastern Pact. The latter was additionally informed that her demand for "equality of rights" in the field of armaments would be fully satisfied {922} .

In response, the German government stated that it was not satisfied with the Anglo-French proposal and therefore it "cannot participate in any international security system as long as other powers dispute the equality of Germany in the field of armaments" {923} . This was the rationale for the formal refusal to participate in the Eastern Pact, contained in the memorandum of the German government of September 8, 1934. Less than three weeks later, the Polish government also announced its refusal.

The idea of the Eastern Pact did not meet with support in the US government either. American diplomats in Europe, including Bullitt, the ambassador to the USSR, launched an active campaign against him. By systematically informing the State Department of his actions, Bullitt viciously slandered Soviet foreign policy, seeking to provide his government with new arguments for pursuing a course hostile to the Eastern Pact. Bullitt asserted without evidence that [288] "behind the guise" of a united front against fascism and war hid the insidious plans of the Bolsheviks "to keep Europe divided", that "it is in the vital interests of the USSR to maintain the bright fire of Franco-German hatred" {924} .

In the interests of the struggle for collective security, the Soviet government decided to join the League of Nations. Such a step did not signify any changes in the fundamental principles of Soviet foreign policy, but represented only their further development in the new historical situation. Soviet foreign policy, showing the necessary flexibility, achieved its main goal - the creation in Europe of a system of collective security as a guarantee of maintaining peace.

In the context of the formation of two centers of the world war, the League of Nations to a certain extent lost its former role as an instrument of anti-Soviet policy and could become an important obstacle in the path of the direct organizers of the war. The existence

of such a possibility became even more evident when Japan and Germany withdrew from the League of Nations.

The initiative to invite the Soviet Union to the League of Nations was supported by 30 states. They turned to the USSR with a proposal "to join the League of Nations and bring her their valuable cooperation" {925} in the struggle for peace. The Soviet Union joined the League of Nations on September 18, 1934, declaring that, despite all its shortcomings, the League of Nations could in some way hinder the development of events on the way to the Second World War. In his first speech at the plenary meeting of the League of Nations, the representative of the USSR emphasized that the Soviet state was not responsible for the actions and decisions of the League taken before its entry into this international organization. US politician S. Welles wrote: "When the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations, even the most stubborn were soon forced to admit that it was the only great power that takes the League seriously" {926} .

The successes of the foreign policy of the USSR were obvious. The rapprochement between the Soviet Union and France was becoming increasingly important in world politics.

The fascist rulers of Germany decided to resort to their favorite method, which they widely used in domestic and foreign policy - terror. A wave of violence swept across Europe. At the request of Berlin, many politicians of European states were either removed or killed. The Romanian Prime Minister Duca was destroyed, the Romanian Foreign Minister Titulescu, who acted in order to preserve the independence and security of his country, was removed, and forced to leave his homeland.

Among those who fell victim to the fascist political terror was the French Foreign Minister Barthou knowing that his life was in danger, he courageously continued to pursue his line.

The execution of the plan to kill Barthou, sanctioned by Hitler and developed by Goering's intelligence, was entrusted to the assistant of the German military attaché in Paris, G. Speidel, who was closely associated with the French ultra-right {927} . As the direct organizer of the assassination, Speidel chose A. Pavelic, one of the leaders of

the reactionary terrorist organization of Croatian nationalists, who was in the service [289]at the Nazis. The carefully designed villainous action "The Sword of the Teutons" was carried out in Marseilles on October 9, 1934. The killer, V. Georgiev, jumped on the bandwagon of a car without hindrance, shot at point blank range the Yugoslav King Alexander, who arrived in France on an official visit, and wounded Barth in the arm. The wounded minister was not given immediate medical attention and bled to death.

The Nazis knew who they were aiming at: the most ardent supporter of the idea of collective security from among the bourgeois politicians was destroyed. "Who knows," wrote the fascist newspaper *Berliner Börsenzeitung* on October 11, 1934, "what means this old man with a strong will would have tried to use ... But the bony hand of death turned out to be stronger than the diplomatic will of Barth. Death appeared at the proper moment and cut off all the threads.

The assassination of Barthou and the subsequent change in the Cabinet of Ministers weakened the ranks of supporters of national foreign policy in France. The post of Minister of Foreign Affairs passed to P. Laval - one of the most disgusting traitors of the country, who rightfully deserved the stigma of "gravediggers of France." Laval represented that part of the ruling circles of the country, which was in extremely anti-Soviet, pro-German positions. A supporter of anti-Soviet collusion with Germany, he made it his task to bury the draft Eastern Pact, abandon the course of Franco-Soviet rapprochement and come to an agreement with the fascist states. Laval put forward a plan dictated to him by the big monopolies: to conclude a guaranteed pact of only three states - France, Poland, and Germany. Such a proposal completely suited the German and Polish governments.

The Soviet Union extended the principles of collective security to countries whose shores were washed by the waters of the Pacific Ocean. Soviet diplomacy literally did not lose a single day. Already in the conversation between People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs MM Litvinov and American President Roosevelt, which took place on the day of the exchange of notes on the establishment of

diplomatic relations, the question of the Pacific Pact was raised. It was assumed that the participants in the pact would be the United States, the USSR, China, and Japan, which would assume obligations of non-aggression, and possibly "on joint actions in case of danger to peace" {928} . Roosevelt instructed Bullitt to conduct further negotiations on the matter.

The meeting of the People's Commissar with the US Ambassador took place in December 1933. Bullitt, without concealing his negative attitude towards the draft Pacific Pact, referred to the position of Japan. With regard to the bilateral Soviet-American non-aggression pact, and perhaps even mutual assistance, he remarked with irony: "... such a pact is hardly necessary, because we are not going to attack each other" {929} , but undertook to inform the president about the conversation. Three months later, Bullitt informed the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs that Roosevelt was inclined to conclude a multilateral Pacific non-aggression pact with the participation of the USSR, the USA, Japan, China, England, France, and Holland {930}. At the end of November 1934, N. Davis, the American delegate to the disarmament conference, told the Soviet plenipotentiary in London about the same thing. The plenipotentiary assured him that the attitude of the Soviet Union towards this idea would be most benevolent. [290] Davis soon announced that the United States would not take the lead in concluding such a pact.

President Roosevelt continued to support the idea of the Pacific Pact for several more years {931} . But the obstacles to his imprisonment were great. Within the United States, the pact was opposed by those forces that, under the flag of isolationism, preferred not to interfere with German and Japanese aggression, hoping to direct it against the Soviet Union. They motivated their position by the fact that the conclusion of the pact would force the United States to take a more decisive position regarding the Japanese seizure of Manchuria. Bullitt also spoke about this. Japan, of course, was also against the pact. The position of England seemed evasive, but in reality it was negative. Thus, in the struggle for peace, the Soviet Union faced enormous obstacles.

The struggle of the USSR for the creation of a system of collective security was of great importance. The greatest merit of the Communist Party and the Soviet government lies in the fact that, even at a time when imperialism was on the distant approaches to the war it was planning, its aggressive policy was opposed by a real, well-thought-out, and well-founded plan for preserving and strengthening peace. And although the pro-peace forces proved insufficient to carry it out, the Soviet plan for collective security played its part. He inspired the masses with confidence in the possibility of defeating fascism through united action. The Soviet idea of collective security carried the germ of the coming victory of the freedom-loving peoples over the fascist enslavers.

3. Conclusion by the Soviet Union of mutual assistance treaties with France and Czechoslovakia

The Soviet idea of collective security met with the growing support of the working masses, whose class consciousness enabled them to foresee the further course of events better than highly experienced bourgeois leaders. Relying on this support, the Soviet Union continued the struggle for peace with growing energy.

When Laval became French Foreign Minister, Soviet diplomacy continued negotiations with him on collective security. The plenipotentiaries of the USSR in France - V. S. Dovgalevsky, then V. P. Potemkin - met with him weekly, again and again discussing questions about the conclusion of the Eastern Pact. Laval surprised even experienced Soviet diplomats with his cynical frankness. Already in the first conversation with the Soviet representative, he declared that he would not hide his intention to achieve a Franco-German rapprochement and agreement {932}. The subsequent talks were permeated with similar remarks by the French Foreign Minister. He even boasted that "of all the politicians in France, he, Laval, did the most to get closer to the Germans" {933} with the Nazis. Laval's "merits" in this black deed were especially evident later, during the Nazi occupation. The French people paid him off in full - in 1945, by a court verdict, he was hanged as a traitor.

Then, in 1934, Laval openly told the Soviet plenipotentiary why he still continues negotiations with the USSR: if an agreement with Germany [291] is possible only by a roundabout way of an agreement between France and Moscow, he is ready to go this way {934} . In other words, Laval resorted to the most unscrupulous trick, which on the eve of the Second World War was widely used not only by French, but also to no lesser extent by British diplomacy. Its essence was to intimidate Germany with rapprochement with the USSR, to achieve an anti-Soviet deal with it on more favorable terms.

The circles represented by Laval nevertheless had to reckon with the enormous popularity that the idea of a joint struggle for peace with the Soviet Union had acquired among the masses of the people of France. In this struggle, Soviet diplomacy also relied on the powerful patriotic movement against the war, in defense of national sovereignty, which engulfed all of France. It overturned the main argument of the opponents of the Eastern Pact, who argued that its conclusion was impossible, since Germany and Poland refused to take part in it. The Soviet government decided to achieve the conclusion of the Eastern Pact with any composition of its participants, even if it were only the Soviet Union and France {935}. It was this approach that was dictated by the real situation and the interests of preventing a new military fire. Unfortunately, even after the Second World War, there are bourgeois historians who do not hesitate to repeat Hitler's slander that the Soviet Union wanted to get closer to France and conclude an agreement with her in the early 1930s, allegedly primarily in order to "spread communist influence on Western Europe" {936} .

In order to conclude a treaty as soon as possible, it was necessary to prevent the desire of the monopolies, whose interests were represented by Laval, to come to an agreement with Nazi Germany at the expense of the USSR. The Soviet government offered France to exchange mutual obligations that neither side would conclude a political agreement with Germany without prior information from the other side about any negotiations of a similar nature and the agreement being prepared. Soviet diplomacy drew the attention of the French government to the fact that Germany offered the Soviet

Union to conclude the Eastern Pact without the participation of France and Czechoslovakia {937} .

Mutual obligations proposed by the USSR formed the content of the Franco-Soviet protocol, signed on December 5, 1934. Czechoslovakia also joined it {938} .

Less than a month later, Laval betrayed his obligations. In Rome, at a meeting with Mussolini, he promised that France would not prevent Italy from seizing Ethiopia, and agreed to recognize Germany's right to arm. Such behavior of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was appropriately assessed by the Soviet plenipotentiary. He drew Laval's attention to the fact that if Germany were given the right to arm herself, then all the more "she would have no incentive to join the Eastern Pact" {939} .

Laval's position provoked sharp criticism not only in France itself, but also from the countries of the Little Entente: Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. The Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that "Romania will be on the side of France only if a Franco-Soviet [292] agreement is concluded", but if this does not happen and the Soviet Union will have to look for other ways to ensure peace, then "Romania will also go with it" {940} .

Continuing to oppose the Eastern Pact, Laval visited London in February 1935. As a result of Franco-British negotiations, a communiqué was published, which proposed a plan for a "general settlement" of international problems {941} . Its meaning boiled down to the following: to link the implementation of the Eastern Pact with the solution of other issues, including disarmament. Returning to France, Laval told the Soviet plenipotentiary that from now on he "is not disposed to single out the Eastern Pact as an independent and priority action" {942} .

At the talks held in early 1935 between England and Germany, the question of the legalization of the latter's weapons was widely discussed. It was quite obvious that the British government was ready to meet the German persecution, guided by the calculations to turn the fascist aggression against the Soviet Union.

In the interest of world peace, Soviet foreign policy used every opportunity to thwart this deal and clear the way for the Eastern Pact. The Soviet plenipotentiary in England regularly met with British Foreign Minister D. Simon, his deputy R. Vansittart and Lord Privy Seal A. Eden, formerly Deputy Foreign Minister. But it proved impossible to force British politicians to move away from the semi-hidden complicity of Hitler's Germany, which was revealed with exhaustive clarity at the end of March 1935, when Simon and Eden visited Berlin.

The British representatives reacted with sympathy to the words of Hitler, who at the meeting declared his negative attitude towards the Eastern Pact. Playing on the anti-Sovietism of British diplomats, Hitler intimidated them with the mythical "Soviet danger", convincing them that fascist Germany was the only bulwark of the West against "Bolshevik Asia" {943} . Eden later said that "Hitler repeatedly returned to the question of the Soviet danger. His argument was basically that Germany was the chief guardian and bulwark of "European civilization" and that therefore she should be given the opportunity to properly arm herself" {944} . Eden was not embarrassed that fascist wolves were applying for the role of "shepherd" of European civilization!

Of course, there were people among the British conservatives who saw that an armed, aggressive Germany was a danger not only to the Soviet Union. So, W. Churchill, in a conversation with the Soviet plenipotentiary, said: "The greatest danger to the British Empire comes from Germany ... Hitler's Germany is a huge scientifically organized war machine with half a dozen gangsters at the head. Everything can be expected from them..." {945} Churchill was "inclined to think that the first blow from Germany would probably not be directed towards the USSR, because it would be rather dangerous. There will probably be other directions" {946} . But those who then stood at the helm of British foreign policy did not think about "other directions" of possible German aggression.

After Berlin, Eden went to Moscow. On March 28, he was received by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR. In a conversation, the people's commissar noted that "Hitler, currently

bringing to the fore in the eastern [293] expansion, wants to trap the Western states and get them to sanction his armaments. When these armaments have reached the level desired by Hitler, the guns may begin to fire in a completely different direction. {947}. On March 29, Eden met with the Soviet leaders. The British diplomat tried to convince the Soviet side that the Eastern Pact was not so necessary, and that the legalization of German arms would not pose a threat to the cause of peace. He even asked whether the Soviet government "does not consider it possible to sanction, at a certain level, the arming of Germany, in particular armaments with the so-called aggressive types of weapons" {948} . To this, the Soviet leaders declared that the USSR would continue the fight against the legalization of German weapons, putting forward a completely clear position: "We cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that Germany is arming itself for an attack, therefore, at the moment we need to take measures to ensure that prevent Germany from arming" {949}. Eden objected: in England "they are not so sure of Germany's aggressiveness as in the USSR" {950} . The Soviet side hinted that no matter how England herself had to be convinced of the opposite.

In bourgeois literature, the view is widespread that the calls of Soviet diplomats to create a system of collective security allegedly were not supported by the government of the USSR {951}. The actual attitude of the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government is evident not only from the Central Committee's resolution of December 12, 1933, but also from the conversation of the Soviet leaders with A. Eden. At the beginning of this conversation, Eden said that Hitler was "very concerned about the might of your Red Army and the threat of an attack on it from the east." He repeated, therefore, the explanation of Germany's military preparations, which was put forward by her leaders in order to obtain support from the Western powers. When, in response to his words, the Soviet side reported that Germany was offering to sell weapons to the USSR, Eden was so shocked that for a moment he lost his restraint. "It's amazing! exclaimed the British diplomat. "Such behavior does not testify in favor of Hitler's sincerity when he tells others about the military threat from the USSR." {952}.

JV Stalin told Eden that he considered the international situation, characterized by the presence of two centers of military danger, extremely alarming, since "there are facts that make us fear the worst in the Far East. Indeed, Japan has withdrawn from the League of Nations and is openly mocking the principles of the League of Nations; Japan, in front of everyone, is tearing up international treaties, under which there are its signatures. It's very dangerous... In Europe, Germany is a big concern. She also withdrew from the League of Nations ... she also openly breaks international treaties in front of everyone's {953} .

In all the talks with Eden the representatives of the USSR emphasized that the Eastern Mutual Assistance Pact would be a real guarantee of peace. The British diplomat, who was assured in Berlin that the Eastern Pact was allegedly aimed at "encircling" Germany, asked if the USSR considered it possible for her to participate in this pact. JV Stalin replied: "We [294]we don't want to surround anyone. We do not seek to isolate Germany. On the contrary, we want to live on friendly terms with Germany... Such a great nation as the Germans had to break free from the chains of Versailles. However, the forms and circumstances of this liberation from Versailles are such that they are capable of causing us serious anxiety, and in order to prevent the possibility of any unpleasant complications, a certain insurance is now needed. Such insurance is the Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance, of course, with Germany, if there is any possibility for this " {954} .

Under the pressure of Soviet argumentation, Eden had to make certain concessions. The official communiqué on the results of the talks said that in "the current international situation, more than ever, it is necessary to continue efforts towards the creation of a system of collective security in Europe." Back in England, Eden was already regretting that he had "agreed to the unnecessarily binding formula" of the communiqué.

During Eden's stay in Moscow, Soviet diplomacy took an important step in the practical implementation of the principle of collective security. On March 29, 1935, an official proposal was made to Laval to conclude a Franco-Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty on mutual

assistance against aggression. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs found himself between two fires: the struggle between supporters and opponents of collective security has reached an unprecedented severity. Among her opponents was the American ambassador to Moscow, Bullitt, who was already preparing to serve as his country's ambassador to France. Subsequently, he himself admitted that he had made great efforts to prevent the conclusion of treaties of mutual assistance {955} . And yet, the preponderance turned out to be on the side of those who created barriers to aggression.

Negotiations on concluding a treaty on mutual assistance have entered the practical stage. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempted to push through a draft treaty that would nullify mutual assistance obligations. It proposed the inclusion of a clause in the text according to which the fulfillment of treaty obligations was subject to a decision in this regard by the Council of the League of Nations. In addition to the fact that the corresponding decision could not be taken quickly, England and France, using the majority of votes in the League of Nations, could always frustrate a resolution they did not want. It should be noted that during the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations in 1939, British diplomacy again proposed a similar mechanism of mutual assistance.

Soviet foreign policy took the initiative into its own hands. On April 15, 1935, Laval received the Soviet draft treaty. The French side presented a counter-project. In subsequent negotiations, the necessary compromise was reached. The Soviet Union upheld the basic principles of the mutual assistance treaty put forward by it.

The Soviet-French treaty on mutual assistance against aggression was signed in Paris on May 2, 1935. Article 2 of the treaty stated that if the USSR or France were, "despite the sincerely peaceful intentions of both countries, the subject of an unprovoked attack by any European state , France and mutually the USSR will immediately render assistance and support to each other» {956} . At the same time [295]the signing protocol, which took into account the completely categorical demand of the French side: the obligations of both states must be consistent with the decision of the Council of the League of Nations. However, paragraph 1 of the protocol stated: "...

both contracting parties will act in concert in order to achieve that the Council makes its recommendations with all the speed that circumstances require, and that if, despite this, the Council does not make, on one or otherwise, no recommendation, and if he does not reach unanimity, then the obligation of assistance will nevertheless be fulfilled (emphasis ours. - Ed.) " {957} . The last words gave the obligations of the treaty that unconditional character on which the Soviet government had insisted all along.

In concluding the Franco-Soviet treaty, the progressive public of France played a significant role, seeing in it a way to save the country from German aggression. The program of the Popular Front, developed at the initiative of the French Communist Party, contained a demand for the creation in Europe of a system of treaties that would strengthen peace.

The signing of the treaty with the Soviet Union did not mean any change in Laval's overall plan. Before leaving for Moscow, he told his socialist friend S. Grumbach: "I am signing the Franco-Russian pact in order to have more advantages when I negotiate with Berlin" {958} . Laval informed the German ambassador in Paris Welczek of the forthcoming signing of the treaty in advance and assured him that the Franco-Soviet treaty did not exclude the closest cooperation between France and Germany. "Bring it to your government," said Laval, "that I am ready at any time to abandon the much-needed Franco-Soviet pact in order to conclude a Franco-German treaty on a grand scale." {959}. At the very moment when the train with the French delegation heading for Moscow crossed the border of the USSR, Laval anxiously asked the former French ambassador to the Soviet Union Alfán: "So how can I arrange it so that I can stop in Berlin on the way back and talk to the Führer? {960}

At the meeting in Moscow, an agreement was reached that negotiations on concluding a multilateral Eastern Pact would be continued. Referring to Franco-Soviet relations at a new stage in their development, the Soviet side resolutely stated the need to supplement the treaty with specific obligations and conclude an appropriate military convention {961} .

On the way back, Laval stopped in Warsaw, ostensibly to persuade Poland to join the Eastern Pact. In fact, he told Beck that France, even after the conclusion of an agreement with the Soviet Union, was not going to resort to the help of the USSR or help the Bolsheviks in the event of an attack on their state by anyone. There, in Poland, Laval met with Goering and discussed the question of concluding a Franco-German military alliance. Meanwhile, the French ambassador in Berlin, François-Poncet, entered into negotiations with Hitler, assuring the fascist leader that the Franco-Soviet pact was not directed against Germany and could not serve as an obstacle to Franco-German rapprochement {962} . [296]

The ratification of the Soviet-French treaty was deliberately delayed. According to the French constitution, it could be ratified by a decision of the President of the Republic. But it was submitted to Parliament for consideration, which lasted ten months and ended only after the resignation of Laval.

The treaty was ratified by the Chamber of Deputies only on February 27, 1936. 353 deputies voted for ratification, 164 against, 100 abstained.

On May 16, 1935, a Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual assistance treaty was signed in Prague, containing the same obligations as the Soviet-French pact. Its signing was a major success for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which constantly explained to the people that only an alliance with the USSR could be a real guarantee of the country's national independence. Even then, the party launched a struggle for the nationwide defense of the republic.

And yet, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, E. Beneš, demanded that an important clause be included in the protocol of signing: "... obligations of mutual assistance will operate between them (the USSR and Czechoslovakia. - Ed.) only because, under the conditions provided for in this agreement, Assistance to the party victim of the attack will be rendered by France." { 963} The reservation clearly indicated that the Czechoslovak government, as well as the French government, cared least of all about the implementation of the treaty. "This clause," said the leader of the

Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, K. Gottwald, "was included in the treaty by the efforts of reactionary circles here, who are still ashamed that the Soviet Union is our faithful ally" {964} .

The role of Beneš in the emergence of this clause has been documented. The official instruction of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Benes inserted the following phrase into the text: "... the obligations of the pact apply to us only if they apply to France." By doing so, Beneš wanted to prevent the automatic operation of the pact. However, the main thing was not what the mechanism of the pact would be, but that the minister was not oriented towards an alliance with the USSR. This is confirmed by the same instruction: "This pact does not mean that we want to change the direction of our policy from the west to the east. We do not want to unilaterally associate with Russia, realizing our belonging to Western Europe" {965}. What the anti-national position of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie, whose interests Beneš expressed, led to is well known.

Characteristic is the statement made by Beneš in a conversation with the British envoy in Prague, Newton in May 1938, when the black clouds of Nazi aggression were already hanging over Czechoslovakia: "Relations between Czechoslovakia and Russia have always had and will continue to be of secondary importance; and the UK. Only the existence of a Franco-Russian alliance made possible the modern alliance of Czechoslovakia with Russia. If, however, Western Europe turns its back on Russia, Czechoslovakia will do the same . Recognizing the objective role of the USSR as a "counterweight" to Germany, Beneš said at the same time that he had always been an opponent of "Russia's excessive influence in Central Europe" {967} . [297]

The Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak treaties could still become a reliable foundation for a pan-European system of collective security. The honest implementation of the treaties by all participants, the support of collective security by other European states could prevent the outbreak of war.

4. Readiness of the Armed Forces of the USSR to fulfill obligations to ensure collective security

The conclusion of the treaties of the Soviet Union with France and Czechoslovakia on mutual assistance was perceived by the ruling circles of Germany with ill-concealed despondency. Plans for the establishment of world hegemony by the German monopolists could hang in the air. Even two and a half years later, Hitler, in a secret conversation with the British emissary Lord Halifax, could not speak without a shudder about the Franco-Soviet treaty. He expressed his fears in more detail to the British ambassador in Berlin, N. Henderson. At a meeting with him, Hitler said that the Franco-Russian pact "became especially dangerous for Germany after the annexation of Czechoslovakia", since the combined forces of the Allies are always "in a position to strike Germany (as an aggressor. - Ed.) in the very heart" {968} .

Hitler's fears were shared by some politicians not only in England and the United States, but even in the countries allied with the USSR - France and Czechoslovakia. To appease Hitler and clear the way for him, they smashed the foundations of collective security in Europe: they undermined the authority of the Soviet Union and sowed distrust in its ability to help the victim of aggression.

In this regard, events that revealed the power of the USSR, such as the Chelyuskin epic of the second half of 1934, acquired great international significance. The enormous efforts, energy and organization shown in rescuing people from a ship trapped in ice stunned the West. The Soviet state, which demonstrated inexhaustible strength, high nobility, and genuine humanism, appeared before the peoples of the world in all its grandeur. In a conversation with the Soviet plenipotentiary in London, I. M. Maisky, the patriarch of the English bourgeoisie, D. Lloyd George, said: "This is amazing! .. This is very noble! .. You have won a great diplomatic victory" {969} .

And yet the reactionary forces, especially Britain, continued to assert that the Soviet state did not have sufficient military potential and therefore could not become a dependable ally in the struggle against

Nazi Germany. In his memoirs, A. Eden acknowledged the existence in England of an "almost universal" opinion that the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union were in a "poor state" {970} . N. Chamberlain, who took the post of Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1937, wrote: "I must confess that I have the deepest distrust of Russia. I have no confidence in her ability to conduct effective offensive operations, even if she wanted to" {971} .

Given the indecisiveness and concessions of the governments of England, France and the United States, Hitler was increasingly inclined to deliver the next blow not in the direction of the USSR. Such fruits were produced by the policy of feeding and appeasing [298] the aggressors, which more and more destroyed the system of defensive alliances of the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, contributed to the growth of the military-strategic potential of Germany, Italy, and Japan, changing the balance of forces in their favor.

"...Hitler's imperialist plans," wrote Army Commander 1st Rank MH Tukhachevsky in his article "Military Plans of Today's Germany," wrote not only an anti-Soviet edge. This point is a convenient screen to cover up revanchist plans in the west (Belgium, France) and in the south (Poznan, Czechoslovakia, Anschluss) ... Germany needs French ore ... and the expansion of its naval base. The experience of the First World War clearly showed that "without a firm possession of the ports of Belgium and the northern ports of France, the maritime power of Germany cannot be built." The last moment will inevitably play a role in the development of Germany's struggle against France and England {972} .

These reasonable and timely warnings of the USSR did not meet with due understanding in the leading circles of Western countries. Arrogant disregard for foreign policy actions aimed at curbing the aggressors led to fatal consequences.

In the interests of peace, it was necessary not only to strengthen the defense of the Soviet country, but also to show the general public the results achieved in this area, as well as the real capabilities of the Armed Forces of the USSR. That is why, beginning in 1935,

representatives of the bourgeois armies were invited to the maneuvers of the Soviet Army. The exercises were organized in the interests of further enhancing and improving the combat and operational-tactical training of the troops. At the large maneuvers of the troops of the Kyiv Military District, which took place from September 12 to 17, 1935, for the first time in world military practice, a new Soviet theory of deep combat and operations was tested with the involvement of mechanized corps and airborne assault forces in addition to rifle and cavalry formations.

The exercises were led by I. E. Yakir, Commander of the Kyiv Military District. The maneuvers were attended by People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR K. E. Voroshilov, his deputies S. M. Budyonny, Ya. foreign countries.

Over a large area, troops were set in motion consisting of 12 corps, numbering 65 thousand people, 1040 tanks, 600 aircraft, 300 guns {973} .

Those present were greatly impressed by the massive attacks of tanks and the dropping of large airborne assault forces in order to demoralize and destroy the rear of the enemy. Military history did not yet know such a landing: 2953 people took part in it, armed (except for carbines) with 29 heavy machine guns, 10 guns, a tank and 6 vehicles {974} .

Similar maneuvers were carried out in the Leningrad Military District under the leadership of its commander B. M. Shaposhnikov. Here, 10 rifle divisions, 2 cavalry divisions, a mechanized corps, and 5 air brigades operated on the fields of exercises. Airborne landings {975} were widely used . [299]

Representatives of foreign powers have received convincing proof that the Soviet Army has in a short time become a first-class modern army capable of reliably defending the world's first socialist state, effectively fulfilling its allied obligations to curb the aggressor and maintain peace in Europe and Asia.

The film, depicting the Kyiv maneuvers, was shown in the Soviet embassies of a number of European states to government members and representatives of the general staffs.

The air power of the USSR was demonstrated by Soviet pilots V. P. Chkalov, G. F. Baidukov and A. V. Belyakov, who made a non-stop flight on the route Moscow - Franz Josef Land - Severnaya Zemlya - Tiksi Bay - Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky - Udd Island with a duration of 56 hours 20 minutes. For the first time in history, they laid an air route to America through the North Pole, covering the distance from Moscow to Vancouver (USA) in 63 hours and 15 minutes. Less than a month later, the second crew, consisting of MM Gromov, A. B. Yumashev, S. A. Danilin, flew over the same route. Records for distance, duration and altitude were set by pilots V.S. Grizodubova, P.D. Osipenko, M.M. Raskova, V.F. Lomako.

The Soviet Union was ready to place its remarkable domestic military equipment, experienced personnel, and advanced military theory at the service of the cause of collective security in Europe.

But her opponents did not lay down their arms. The discussion of the treaty on mutual assistance against aggression, concluded between the USSR and France, which took place in the Chamber of Deputies of the French Parliament, was accompanied by anti-Soviet attacks. Thus, on February 12, 1936, deputy F. Laurent said that the French generals negatively assessed the Soviet Army and its personnel, and another member of parliament, P. Taittinger, on February 18 stated that the Soviet Union "is not able to withstand a war with a first-class state, it is not will be able to move from defense to offensive" {976} .

Such assurances pursued a very definite goal - to prevent the establishment of military cooperation between the USSR and France. The governments of France and Czechoslovakia, under great pressure both from internal reaction and from Hitler's Germany and its Anglo-American friends, did not intend to strengthen their relations with the Soviet Union. Mutual assistance treaties were effectively nullified by them. It was obvious that the Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak treaties would become an effective weapon

in the fight against aggression only when they were supplemented by military conventions. But this is exactly what the reactionaries did not want. Two days after the signing of the treaty with the Soviet Union, the General Staff of France, headed by Gamelin, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to an agreement{977}.

Of course, the Soviet Union was not informed about this. The Soviet High Command guessed the line of the French General Staff. People's Commissar of Defense K. E. Voroshilov reported to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) :] a vague and meaningless answer that would allow Gamelin to prove in the government the futility and disadvantage of friendly relations with the Soviet Union " {978} .

French right-wing socialists supported the negative attitude of the reaction to the conclusion of a military convention with the Soviet Union. In 1936, when their leader L. Blum headed the government, the situation did not change. The French prime minister acknowledged that "the Russians were very eager to have an agreement concluded between the general staffs of both countries ... But this was not done. The insistent proposals of the Russians were met with evasive answers. Russia solemnly undertook to report full data on its military resources, industrial capabilities, and supplies that could provide us in the event of a European conflict. She asked that we, for our part, pass on similar information to her, but their transfer was delayed " {979} .

After the war, when the perpetrators of its defeat in 1940 appeared before the French Parliament, Blum gave important testimony. He said that in 1936, through his son who had been in Prague, he received a confidential letter from Benes, which contained a warning "to observe the greatest precautions in our relations with the Soviet General Staff", since he, Benes, has information that the Soviet military leaders "maintain suspicious relations with Germany" {980} .

The bourgeois world went to great lengths to undermine the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces. This was done even by the leaders of the governments that had concluded treaties with the USSR on mutual assistance against aggression.

The Soviet Union treated its obligations under the treaties with France and Czechoslovakia with the utmost responsibility. Guided by the provisions of V. I. Lenin, Soviet foreign policy made a lot of efforts to develop the most important and urgent ways to strengthen the defense of the Soviet state, maintain peace on earth; even then she dealt with the problems of creating an anti-Hitler coalition. In the situation of that time, when there was only one socialist state in Europe, such a coalition was possible only as a military-defensive alliance of countries with different social systems. The question arose: is a coalition of European countries so different in their state and social system possible at all? To this question, which was of decisive, fundamental importance, Soviet policy gave a completely positive answer.

At the same time, it was taken into account that the attitude of members of coalitions of this kind to their allied obligations cannot but be different. There could be no doubt about the conscientious attitude of the Soviet Union to its obligations to the allies. On the part of the bourgeois participants in the coalitions, one could assume a desire to evade the fulfillment of their obligations and even expose the socialist country to an enemy attack. It was clear that, entering into a coalition with the USSR, the capitalist governments would retain ideological, and in some cases not only ideological hostility towards the country of socialism, which would affect all their activities as part of the coalition. [301]

But then another question arose: is it worth going to a coalition in such a situation? The answer to it was given in due time - albeit in a different connection - by V. I. Lenin, who believed that one should not refuse "every, even the slightest, opportunity to get a mass ally, even if temporary, shaky, fragile, unreliable, conditional» {981}.

From all this the conclusion followed that the Soviet side would have to fight for a certain political, military, and economic unity of the coalition members. Political unity was to be expressed in the development of joint, at least compromise goals and actions of the coalition; military unity - in specific plans for the use of the armed forces and material resources of coalition members in various situations; economic unity was conceived as the creation of a well-

coordinated system of economic and financial mutual assistance, which, in the event of war, could successfully withstand the brunt of the inevitable trials.

The Soviet Union believed that the issues of cooperation between the members of the coalition should be developed and formalized in a contractual manner. First of all, it was necessary to conclude military conventions of the coalition members, the development and adoption of which was given great importance, since without them political alliances were deprived of practical value.

Mutual allied obligations regarding the military-technical side of the coalition struggle should be clearly formulated in the conventions, a common point of view on fundamental military problems concerning the choice of the main theater of war, the main operational-strategic directions, approximate options for the actions of the allied forces, lines and time of deployment of troops, the principles of directing the war as a whole and in individual theaters of operations, the communication systems of the allied command and political leadership.

All specific military questions arising from the needs of the armed struggle, but not set out in the military convention, were recommended to be submitted to joint meetings of the general staffs of the allied powers. Their competence would include determining the main enemy grouping and its size in each specific situation, establishing the decisive theater of operations and operational directions, calculating the required number of troops and the amount of material and technical means for the successful conduct of a particular operation, identifying methods of action, maintaining a stable communications of the allied command.

The Soviet military leadership proceeded from the fact that the military power of the coalition depends on the ability of the allied countries to quickly mobilize their industrial and economic resources for the needs of the war, on the size and combat effectiveness of the armies, on the capabilities and ability to concentrate superior forces on decisive theaters, constantly develop

and maintain a high technical equipment and the necessary number of armed forces throughout the war.

In addition to political, economic, and military issues, the influence of the geographic structure of the coalition was extremely important. Its geographic contours could represent a compact whole or consist of parts distant from one another.

A comprehensive approach to many of the most important aspects of building a coalition and its functioning allowed the Soviet diplomatic and military bodies to solve in practice a wide range of issues confidently and skillfully in connection with the conclusion of mutual assistance treaties [302] with France and Czechoslovakia. However, it was not possible to complete the development of these questions since all attempts by the USSR to concretize mutual obligations with France and Czechoslovakia against aggression met with opposition from the governments of these countries.

The outstanding Soviet military leader B. M. Shaposhnikov, who soon became Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, on the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government, prepared a plan of action for the Armed Forces of the USSR in accordance with these obligations. The Soviet Union offered France two options for rendering military assistance to France in the event of aggression from Germany.

According to the first option, if Poland and Romania, allies of France, give (by their own decision or by the decision of the League of Nations) consent to the passage of Soviet troops through their territory, the USSR expressed its readiness to "provide assistance by all branches of the armed forces" and "in the necessary amount, which should be established by special agreement between the states concerned.

According to the second option, if Poland and Romania refuse to allow Soviet troops to pass through their territory, the USSR pledged to provide assistance "by sending ground troops by sea" and by air, and air forces - under its own power. "The amount of this assistance (as in the first option) should be established by a special agreement between the countries concerned." In both cases, the USSR promised

to provide "assistance with its naval forces" and ensure the supply of gasoline, fuel oil, oils, manganese, food, weapons, engines, tanks, aircraft, etc. to France and Czechoslovakia.

For its part, the USSR asked legitimate questions: what help could France give it if it was attacked by Germany, and how should the amount of this help be determined? What types of weapons could France supply the USSR? {982}

The Soviet Union proposed discussing these or other possible options at the level of general staffs and concretizing mutual obligations to combat aggression. But his proposal did not find support from the French government. The French Ministers of War - Daladier, Morin and Delbos, the leadership of the French General Staff - Generals Gamelin and Weygand had a negative attitude towards the alliance with the USSR and mutual military assistance.

The Soviet Union, having at its disposal significant Armed Forces, well-trained personnel, advanced military theory, sought to use them to maintain a system of collective security in Europe. In the conditions of acute international crisis situations, he was not only ready to come to the aid of his allies at any moment, but also took practical steps in this direction.

The entry of troops of Nazi Germany into the Rhine demilitarized zone on March 7, 1936, did not leave the Soviet Union indifferent. The government of the USSR declared that it was ready to provide all possible assistance to France if, having come out in defense of peace and peace negotiations, she was attacked by Germany. It pointed out that the treaty between the USSR and France "does not contain any restrictions" regarding the conditions under which mutual assistance should be provided {983} . The Soviet government did not look for any loopholes in the text of the treaty in order to avoid fulfilling its obligations, but, on the contrary, sought to do more than what its formal terms required. [303]The Soviet state realistically assessed the balance of power. At the time of the entry of German troops into the Rhine demilitarized zone, Germany had 36 divisions, France, and Czechoslovakia - 55, and the Soviet Union on its western border - 60 divisions {984} . There were all the conditions

for rebuffing the aggressor. But this is precisely what French reaction did not want.

A vivid example of the fulfillment by the Soviet Union of its obligations can be its actions in defense of the Mongolian People's Republic. On March 12, 1936, in connection with the threat of an attack on her by Japanese militarists, the Soviet-Mongolian protocol on mutual assistance {1936} was signed. Circumstances demanded to strengthen the defense of the MPR. Based on the provisions of the treaty, the USSR sent the 57th Special Rifle Corps to help the republic, which forced the Japanese invaders to postpone the attack on the Mongolian People's Republic.

Thus, in the mid-1930s there was a sharp struggle between the Soviet Union, which was at the head of the forces of peace and progress, and the fascist countries, which were building up their military might with the support of all world reaction.

The main content of this struggle was the solution of the question - to be peace or war. The USSR stood for peace, for broad cooperation with all countries. Soviet diplomacy adhered to the rule: "Do not wait for peace, but fight for it." The USSR opposed the aggressive foreign policy strategy of the countries of the fascist bloc with the principle of the indivisibility of peace and collective security.

An important result of the diplomatic efforts of the Soviet Union was its entry into the League of Nations, the conclusion of mutual assistance treaties with France and Czechoslovakia, which strengthened the military-strategic position of their participants and forced fascist Germany, in the event of aggressive actions against one country or another, to reckon with the likelihood of war on two fronts.

Lenin's principled and at the same time flexible foreign policy enabled the USSR to achieve the most important thing - to ensure peaceful conditions for socialist construction, the early implementation of the five-year plans and the building of socialism. The historic successes of the Land of Soviets have changed the balance of power in the international arena. The Soviet Union has strengthened its role as a great power and the main bulwark of the

struggle for peace, against the threat of a new war, and has won loyal allies in the person of the working masses in the noble struggle for a brighter future for mankind.

Development of the anti-war movement

1. The international working class is the leading anti-war force

The Soviet Union was not alone in the struggle for peace. He fulfilled this sacred mission in close unity with all progressive forces.

planets. The most principled, resolute, and consistent opponent of the war was the international working class and its vanguard, the communist parties. Objectively, the broadest masses of the people were interested in the success of the anti-war movement: the peasantry, artisans, the petty bourgeoisie of the city, the intelligentsia and all honest people who understood what horrors a new world war could bring.

Coming out against the military adventures of the ruling classes is a long tradition of the working-class movement, which the communists are purposefully developing. In the program documents of the First International, written by K. Marx and F. Engels, the need for a resolute struggle of the proletariat against predatory wars was repeatedly emphasized. "If the emancipation of the working class requires the fraternal cooperation of the workers," wrote K. Marx, "then how can they accomplish this great task in the presence of a foreign policy that, pursuing criminal goals, plays on national prejudices and sheds blood and squanders wealth in predatory wars?" people?" {986}

Developing this position, he spoke of the duty of the working class "to master the secrets of international politics, to follow the diplomatic activities of their governments and, if necessary, to counteract it by all means ...". When it is not possible to prevent a war, the proletariat is called upon to unite to fight it, striving to ensure that "the simple laws of morality and justice, which should guide private individuals in their relationships, become the highest laws in relations between peoples.

The struggle for such a foreign policy is part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working class .

The anti-war movement of the masses under the banner of the working class was a serious obstacle to imperialism's path to the First World War. Long before it, the proletariat proclaimed its task to prevent a military catastrophe. However, the dominance of the opportunists in the majority [305] of the parties of the Second International led to the fact that the solution of this task was frustrated. When the war broke out, the leaders of most of the Social Democratic parties voted in parliaments for war credits. They made a class peace with the bourgeoisie and, under the slogan of "defence of the fatherland", called on the working people to go to the front, became open allies and accomplices of "their own" imperialist bourgeoisie, which was waging a predatory war. Opportunism grew into social-chauvinism, joined forces with nationalism and militarism.

V. I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, while remaining faithful to socialism and proletarian solidarity, rallied the revolutionary internationalists of other countries around themselves. They raised high the banner of struggle against the world war of robbers. The Bolshevik Party was the first political party to proclaim the slogans: turn the imperialist war into a civil war, prepare and carry out a revolutionary way out of it, resolutely "break with social chauvinism and centrism, create a new, revolutionary International. The Bolshevik Party showed in practice how to combine the struggle for peace with the struggle for revolution. Her tactics in 1914-1917. became a model of proletarian tactics in the conditions of the imperialist war.

With the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the movement for peace merged in the politics and actions of the international proletariat with the struggle to defend the Soviet state from the encroachments of the imperialists. This happened because, V. I. Lenin explained, that the proletarians of other countries understood: "... any victory of the international bourgeoisie over Soviet Russia would mean the greatest victory of world reaction over the working class in general" {988} .

After the First World War and the defeat of the anti-Soviet intervention, during the period of temporary and partial stabilization of capitalism, the working class and its communist parties vigilantly followed all the tricks of the imperialist politicians, realizing the danger of new predatory wars. The peoples of the Soviet Union, led by the Communist Party, stood at the head of the peace-loving forces. It was she who, by her example, experience, consistency, and intransigence towards the enemies of the world, inspired the anti-war movement and enriched it with new traditions.

The emergence of the Soviet state on the world stage, the formation of communist and workers' parties, the growth of the national liberation struggle in the colonial and dependent countries led to the fact that the anti-war movement assumed a more massive and militant character. A powerful factor in its strengthening was the growth in the size of the working class in the largest capitalist states, the leading political force in the anti-war struggle. If at the beginning of the 20th century the industrial proletariat of England, the USA, France, and Germany numbered 30 million people {989} in its ranks , then by the 1930s - more than 60 million. The proportion of workers (including families) in society was: in the USA in 1929 - 65-66 percent, in England in 1931 - 80, in Germany in 1933 - 68-71 percent {990} .

The prestige and influence of the communist parties increased. This was evidenced by the growth of the Third Communist International. If at the time of its creation (March 1919) there were only a few communist parties and communist groups in the world, then in 1928 57 parties were represented at the Congress of the Comintern. There were 445,300 communists in their ranks in the capitalist countries. In 1935, the Comintern already united [306] 76 communist parties and organizations, and the number of communists in the capitalist world grew to 785,000 {991} .

The communist parties, relying on the Leninist ideas and experience of the CPSU (b), influenced the working class through mass international organizations: red and revolutionary trade unions that were part of the Red International of Trade Unions (Profintern); organizations of the International working aid (Mezhrabpom); the

International Organization for Assistance to the Fighters of the Revolution (IOPR); Komsomol, united in the Communist Youth International (KIM); various societies of friends of the Soviet Union, etc. They also carried out work in mass proletarian organizations adjoining other political trends - social democracy, anarcho-syndicalism, etc. The advanced proletarians - members of the Revolutionary Trade Union Organization (RPO) - acted in the ranks of reformist trade unions in many countries that were members of the International Union of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International),{992} . The communists had some positions in the organizations that were part of the anarcho-syndicalist international of trade unions, which in 1933 united more than 1 million members {993} .

The increase in the solidarity and organization of the proletariat, the strengthening of the influence of the communist and workers' parties contributed to the intensification of the activities of various world congresses and conferences that advocated peace and against the threat of war. In a number of cases, such international forums have begun to shift from positions of abstract pacifism to a more active struggle against the specific perpetrators and instigators of new wars and armed conflicts. The anti-war movement was expanding in individual colonies and dependent countries.

Although the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries were not yet able to win the majority of the working class over to their side and remained small in many countries, they nonetheless had stable ties with the working masses and actively participated in their struggle to preserve peace. But wider than the organizational impact was the political influence of the communist movement. Its strength lay in the fact that it came up with a program that met the fundamental interests of broad sections of the people and outlined the path of struggle against the emerging war.

In the struggle to unite the working people against the offensive of the bourgeoisie and its military adventures, the tactics of the united workers' front, worked out in 1921, played an important role. Anti-war tasks assumed particular importance in the second half of the 1920s, when the danger that imperialism was preparing for a new

world war became clear. At the VIII Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in May 1927, the theses "The Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle Against War and the War Danger" were adopted.

The theses spoke of the growth of militarism and fascist tendencies in the capitalist countries, the desire to strengthen the rear for war, the ideological preparation of the bourgeoisie for war, and outlined the tactical line of the communist parties in the struggle against the imperialist war.

In 1928, at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, a clear and detailed program of struggle against the imperialist [307] war was worked out. In the decisions of the Congress it was written: "Capitalism is the cause of the wars of modern history" [994], and it is also said that during armed clashes between imperialist states, the proletariat fights to defeat its own governments, seeking to turn the imperialist war into a civil one. The same position of principle must be taken by the working class of the capitalist countries in the event of a war by the bourgeoisie against the national-revolutionary movement of the colonial peoples and in the event of a counter-revolutionary war of imperialism against the proletarian dictatorship. At the same time, the proletariat supports and wages national revolutionary wars and wars of socialism against imperialist aggression, organizing the defense of national revolutions and proletarian dictatorships.

The congress noted that the growing danger of a new imperialist war was based on the striving of the capitalist powers to destroy Soviet power in the USSR and stifle the Chinese revolution. "But with the sharpening of the contradictions between the imperialist powers themselves, it is also possible, before this war breaks out, a clash between the two imperialist groups of states in the struggle for world hegemony" [995] .

Thus, the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the international situation made it possible for the Sixth Congress of the Comintern even 11 years before the Second World War to predict a possible variant of its occurrence, to outline a program for the anti-war movement, to

work out a whole range of measures that the communist parties should have carried out in the struggle against the aggression of the imperialist powers.

The Comintern rightly emphasized the need to link the anti-war movement with the class struggle against capital, but at that time it believed that only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie in the most important imperialist countries could the unleashing of a world war be prevented {996} . As a result, the anti-war platform of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern unnecessarily sharpened the blow against the Social Democracy and pacifist movements. Nevertheless, the program of action worked out against the imperialist war was the most important political document, which had a tremendous impact on the subsequent course of the anti-war struggle.

The development of events in the 1920s showed that the Social Democracy, as the main support of the bourgeoisie in the working class, was striving with all its might to preserve capitalism, spreading illusions about its "peacefulness", and thereby covering up its aggressiveness. It was guided by the fact that internationally intertwined capital allegedly creates a commonality of social interests, the possibility of eternal peace between different countries. Denying the militancy of imperialism, K. Kautsky believed that in Europe its "desire for expansion" had disappeared; if we talk about military violence, then "industrial capitalism does not need it" {997} .

In the decision of the Marseille Congress of the Socialist Workers' International (August 1925), social democratic theorists attempted to justify imperialist aggression. They looked for its roots not in the nature of imperialism, but in the development of the national liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries, and also in the fact that "the Communist International harbors the illusion that the liberation of the workers can be brought on the bayonets of the victorious Red [308] Army and that a new world war is needed for the victory of the world revolution" {998} . Thus, the right-wing leaders of the Social Democracy betrayed the workers' cause, going over to the ideological positions of the imperialist bourgeoisie in questions of war and peace.

At the Brussels Congress of the Socialist Workers' International (August 1928), the leaders of the Social Democracy, under the pressure of circumstances, were forced to speak about the vices of capitalism, about its inherent tendencies that push for war, and to come up with a pacifist disarmament program. But they continued to keep the workers who followed them from decisive struggle and continued to slander the Soviet Union and the Comintern. O. Bauer, for example, stated in his speech that "the Bolsheviki are now orienting themselves towards new wars as the source of a new revolutionary wave" {999} . The Menshevik F. Dan, calling the Soviet system "the socialism of war", advocated the replacement in the USSR of "the regime of dictatorship by a regime of republican democracy and political freedom" {1000}.

The course of the Social Democrats towards class cooperation with the bourgeoisie in the field of foreign policy split the international working-class movement and significantly weakened the anti-war struggle of the working people.

As before, during the years of partial stabilization of capitalism, the working class and its communist parties were the organizers of mass demonstrations of the working people against the military actions of the capitalist powers, using international progressive organizations. The largest anti-war action was the 900,000-strong political strike of French workers in October 1925 against the colonial war of the imperialists in Morocco and Syria. During its course, the labor movement for the first time in the history of France showed full and unconditional solidarity with the peoples of the colonies, demanding for them the right to self-determination.

In the spring of 1927, in response to provocations against the Land of the Soviets and the military intervention of the Anglo-American imperialists in China, a campaign was widely launched under the slogans "Hands off Soviet Russia!", "Hands off the Chinese revolution!". As soon as the events in China became known, the Political Secretariat of the ECCI sent a telegram to the leadership of the Communist Parties, stating: "There is no doubt that the conspiracy was organized by England, provoking war with the USSR. The Chinese ports are occupied by the imperialists. The

situation is extremely tense. There is a war against the Chinese revolution; a war against the USSR is threatening. All Communist Parties are obliged to raise the broadest masses to their feet, to use all auxiliary organizations and the youth. It is categorically necessary to organize mass anti-British demonstrations as soon as possible, if possible before the British embassies and consulates. Where possible, requests to parliament are needed, demands for clarity in the position of the government" {1001} . As a sign of solidarity with the Soviet people, a many-thousand-strong demonstration of British workers took place in London, condemning the provocateurs and warmongers.

In June 1927, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, taking into account the aggravation of the international situation caused by Great Britain breaking off diplomatic relations with the USSR, addressed a letter to all party organizations, to all workers and peasants, in which he called for vigilance.

At the World Congress of Friends of the USSR, held in Moscow in November 1927, the Appeal of the Congress of Friends of the USSR was adopted. In it [309] envoys from 43 countries firmly stated that the war against the USSR would be regarded as the greatest crime against humanity.

A certain role in the anti-war campaign of 1927 was played by the Mezhrabpom, as well as the League for the Struggle against Colonial Oppression (Anti-Imperialist League). With their help, the best representatives of the intelligentsia and many leaders of the national liberation movement were drawn into the struggle against the imperialist war.

The Communist Party of Germany actively fought against the militarization of the country. When the government began to implement a program to expand the navy, a campaign was launched in the country at its call under the slogan "Not a single pfennig for the construction of battleships!". In 1928, the KKE came out in favor of holding a popular poll against the construction of armadillos. By October 1928, 1.2 million {1002} signatures had been collected .

The communists of all countries tried to rouse the broad masses of workers and peasants to anti-war actions. They issued appeals, leaflets and pamphlets that exposed the imperialist policy of preparing for war, and explained to the working people the connection between their immediate demands and anti-war slogans. In accordance with the decisions of the VI Congress of the Comintern, a conference of 13 Communist Parties, held on May 16, 1929, in Brussels under the leadership of the Western European Bureau of the ECCI, proposed to celebrate the International Day of Struggle Against the Imperialist War on August 1 every year and worked out the forms of the anti-war campaign {1003}. The 10th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (July 1929) approved this decision and recommended that the Communist Parties "take all the necessary preparatory measures in order to give the international proletariat's action on August 1 against the imperialist war and in defense of the USSR the character of a militant review of the revolutionary proletarian forces" {1004} .

As one of the main slogans of the Communist Party put forward the defense of the Soviet Union from the imperialist attack. On August 1, 1929, in many capitalist countries, despite the police terror, anti-war demonstrations and strikes were organized, numerous rallies and meetings were held. In France, for example, on the outskirts of Paris, 8,000 workers of the Citroën automobile plant, 65 percent of the workers of the Saint-Denis region, left the mines of 70 percent of the miners of Saint-Etienne, about 90 percent of the dock workers in Bordeaux and Marseilles went on strike. Strikes also took place in Lille, Roubaix, Rouen, Nancy, Longwy, Toulouse and other cities. In Troyes, the soldiers of the cavalry battalion fraternized with the strikers of the textile factories {1005}. Summing up the results of these events, the French Communist Party in its decision noted that in the most important regions of the country the workers supported its call and that part of the demonstrations also covered the province {1006} .

Anti-war demonstrations also took place in the USA, England, Germany, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Argentina, and other countries. However, the Comintern and the Communist

Parties assessed the speeches of August 1, 1929, as a partial success, since the movement did not take on the necessary scope, did not embrace the entire proletariat, the connection with the struggle for the united front of the workers was still weak, and the network of anti-war committees was not wide enough. [310]

The communist parties appealed to the workers - members of the social democratic parties and reformist trade unions - to create a united front to fight for the daily needs of the working people and against the war. The proletarian press paid great attention to exposing the imperialist plans of the ruling circles of France, England, and Japan, and exposed the anti-Soviet orientation of the projects for the creation of a "pan-Europe", a "Balkan federation" and the like. The magazine Communist International emphasized that in the difficult conditions of the growth of capitalist contradictions and the intensification of the struggle on the world stage, the campaign to hold an international anti-war day in 1930 should "become the most important factor delaying the war, strengthen and expand the resistance of the working class against any attempt at imperialist war and strengthen his will to defend the USSR" {1007}

On August 1, 1930, demonstrations and strikes took place, which turned out to be more massive than on the anti-war day of the previous year. But as a result of the repressions of the bourgeois governments, the stubborn opposition of the Social Democratic leaders, as well as shortcomings in the organizational work of the communist parties and individual manifestations of sectarianism in their ranks, the majority of the working class still remained aloof from active participation in the movement. "The bottleneck of the fighting day in 1929/30 was," wrote the Communist International, "that these campaigns often had a narrow party character and did not sufficiently mobilize the broad masses of workers and peasants" {1008}. The communists underestimated the strength of the links between social democratic workers and their leaders. And when the Communists aimed their blows in the anti-war campaign also against the Social Democracy, without separating its reactionary leaders and the rank-and-file Social-Democratic workers to the

necessary extent, this naturally hindered the creation of a united anti-war front of the workers.

The end of the stabilization of capitalism, the unfolding of the most severe crisis of 1929-1933, the intensification of the aggressiveness of imperialism introduced new elements into the anti-war struggle of the international working class. The undoubted merit of the Communist Parties was that, taking into account the new situation, they were the first to raise the question of the need for mass mobilization of the working people for peace and against the imperialist war and began a stubborn struggle to create a broad anti-war front. The CPSU(b) played an outstanding role in this. On its initiative, supported by other communist parties, questions of war and peace were discussed in March-April 1931 at the 11th plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in Moscow.

M. Kashen made a report "On the Intensification of the Military Danger and the Tasks of the Communists". He, like G. Dimitrov, E. Telman and others who participated in the debate, showed that the international situation had become aggravated, that plans for intervention against the USSR were hatched in the imperialist countries of Europe, while the ruling circles of France were at the head of various kinds of anti-Soviet speeches. The remnants of the White Guard officers who had taken refuge abroad, it was pointed out at the plenum, are constantly financed by the imperialist powers, and are being prepared for the struggle against the Land of Soviets. Materials were cited on the active support of the intervention plans by the US ruling circles.

The strengthening of militarism, as well as the growth of armaments in the world of capital, determined the anti-war nature of the documents adopted by the 11th Plenum of the ECCI. In particular, his resolution read: "The unfolding world economic crisis as a result of the struggle of the imperialist [311] powers for markets exacerbates all imperialist contradictions, making them especially acute. The danger of military conflicts between the imperialist powers is growing. But the growth of contradictions in the interests of the imperialists does not weaken, but, on the contrary, exacerbates the danger of an intervention war against the USSR» {1009} .

The speeches of all participants in the plenum were permeated with the idea of the need to intensify anti-militarist work. "Our duty," said M. Kashen, "is to develop a powerful broad movement against imperialism, its murders and destruction, against the unheard-of cruelty of aviation, chemical and bacteriological warfare, against the mass slaughter that is now being prepared and which will once again flood humanity in an ocean of blood" { 1010} . G. Dimitrov pointed out that sympathy for the Soviet Union alone was not enough to prevent intervention. The war machine of mass coercion, he emphasized, "does not stop at the passive unwillingness of the masses to fight, and ... only the active revolutionary struggle of the masses under the leadership of the Communist Party can delay its launch or, when it is in motion, disorganize it" {1011}. The speakers called for popularization among the working people of the capitalist countries of the glorious traditions of the anti-war struggle under the slogan "Hands off Soviet Russia!", the uprising of French sailors on the Black Sea in 1919 and other historical examples of proletarian solidarity.

The decisions of the 11th plenum stressed that it was "necessary to strengthen the anti-militarist work of the communist parties, and especially the communist youth unions ..." {1012} . Its resolution stated that it depended on the activity of the communist parties and every communist whether "sympathy for the working class of the USSR on the part of the broadest masses of workers, working peasants, oppressed nations of the capitalist countries will turn into an active revolutionary struggle against the danger of war and military intervention against the USSR, or to the capitalists it will be possible to again lead the working people to a fratricidal war" {1013}.

The struggle of the working class and the communist parties for the expansion of the front of the opponents of the imperialist war ran, as before, against the opposition of the leaders of the right-wing Social Democrats. Thus, at the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Workers' International in Vienna, being unable to deny the increased danger of war, they propagated the old thesis that its threat comes from the dictatorial regimes of "Reds or Whites", that is, from the USSR. The

chairman of the executive committee of this international, E. Vandervelde, in his speech tried to prove that the Soviet regime could not exist without a strong militaristic apparatus {1014} .

At the same time, there were speeches at the Congress of Vienna that reflected the views and moods of the advanced part of the Social Democrats, who were striving for an active anti-war struggle. The representative of the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, F. Brockway, proposed to associate the movement against the war with the struggle against imperialism and capitalism, and in the event of its unleashing, advocate the overthrow of capitalism {1015} . But these proposals were rejected by Congress. [312]

Thus, in response to the growing danger of war, the anti-war movement of broad sections of the population became more active, led by the international working class and its militant vanguard, the Comintern. The emergence of hotbeds of a new imperialist war for the redivision of the world put before the revolutionary proletariat the task of creating a broad anti-war front.

2. The struggle for the creation of an anti-war front during the outbreak of hotbeds of war

World economic crisis 1929-1933 put an end to the temporary stabilization of capitalism. The international situation has become even more aggravated. Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the coming to power of fascism in Germany in 1933 left no doubt that the capitalist world was rapidly moving towards a big new war.

During this period, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the working masses intensified. In many countries, the influence of communist parties increased.

The working class and its communist parties initiated the formation of anti-war committees, sought to intensify the activities of trade unions, youth unions, the Mezhrabpom, MOPR, societies of friends of the Soviet Union, progressive societies of the intelligentsia, etc. Numerous rallies were held in many countries under the slogans: "Against the threat of war!", "War on the imperialist war!", "Defend the Soviet Union!", "Down with Japanese imperialism!" etc. An

international committee for assistance to China was set up, headed by R. Rolland and A. Barbusse {1016} .

After the Japanese attack on China, mass anti-war demonstrations took place in Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, and some other cities. In the appeal with which the CPJ addressed the working people in September 1931, the slogans were proclaimed: "Stop the production of weapons! Workers, peasants, unemployed, organize strikes and protest demonstrations against the war!", "Japanese soldiers at the front, fraternize with Chinese soldiers!", "Defend revolutionary China and the Red Army! (China. - Ed.)", "Defend the Soviet Union!", "Down with Japanese imperialism!" {1017} .

In connection with the events in the Far East, the course of Japanese militarism towards pan-Asianism, its propaganda of the struggle against "white imperialism", for the creation of an "East Asian sphere of mutual prosperity" posed a particular danger. This course determined Japan's policy towards Manchuria, the creation of pan-Asian economic and political blocs, a policy ultimately directed against China and the USSR.

The capture of Manchuria, the bloody events in Shanghai, like all the atrocities of the Japanese predators, aroused the anger and indignation of the peoples of Asia and the whole world, roused thousands of patriots to fight aggression. The tasks of the CPJ during this period were formulated in one of the documents developed jointly with the Comintern. It said: "The war will inevitably exacerbate the class contradictions within the country to the extreme. It will set before the Japanese proletariat and its Communist Party the task of combining [313] the struggle against war with the struggle for the vital interests of the workers, peasants, and all working people, against their economic and political slavery, with the aim of turning the imperialist war into a civil war, with the aim of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois-landlord monarchy.» {1018} .

The 12th Plenum of the ECCI, held in August-September 1932, indicated that the CPJ was obliged to intensify its work in the army and navy, especially in Manchuria, to reveal the inextricable link

between the imperialist war and the direct preparation of military intervention against the USSR, on the one hand, and to strengthen military-police reaction and robbery of the working masses in Japan itself - on the other {1019} .

With the beginning of Japanese aggression in the Far East, especially difficult tasks arose before the Communist Party of China. Defining them, the Comintern directed the communists to organize a mass anti-Japanese movement in China, to universal armed resistance to the invaders. The plenum noted that the CPC should continue to "make every effort to ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in the mass anti-imperialist movement in Kuomintang China, widely and consistently apply the tactics of a united front from below in the anti-imperialist struggle of the masses ..." {1020} .

From the first days of hostilities, the Communist Party of Japan began organizing mass demonstrations and meetings, and an anti-war campaign at enterprises. Under her leadership, several major strikes took place, which acquired a political, anti-war character. Through the efforts of the communists, illegal circles were created at universities and colleges. In May and August 1932 anti-war demonstrations took place in many villages. The party did a great deal of work among the soldiers, drawing them into the revolutionary movement.

Other communist parties of the Asian continent also joined the movement against the war. In India, the Communist Party from 1925 to 1933 was virtually deprived of a unified leadership: all members of the Central Committee were in prison. In 1933, a new Central Committee was elected, which led the leadership of the party throughout the country. In close cooperation with the Communist Parties of Japan and China, the Communists of Korea and Taiwan opposed the war, constantly increasing their ranks.

The creation and strengthening of parties of a new type—communist parties—in many countries of the Asian continent was a step towards consolidating the forces of the peoples of Asia against Japanese aggression, for preventing a new world war, and along the path of developing a national liberation movement. The communists

of Asian countries opposed imperialism as selfless fighters, unafraid of reprisals and persecution. Where the people took up arms, they were in its first battle ranks. Under the leadership of the Communist Parties, strikes, demonstrations, and campaigns were successfully carried out in many Asian countries against the transport of military materials for Japan.

The peoples of the planet, realizing perfectly well that the boundary line between peace and war is becoming more and more blurred, have intensified their movement against unleashing a new imperialist war, against the aggressive course of the Japanese military, against preparing an attack on the Soviet Union. On February 6, 1932, the joint appeal of the communist parties of Germany, France, England, Czechoslovakia, and Poland was published, which stressed the need to protect China from the threat of division by the imperialist powers, to strengthen international proletarian [314] assistance to the anti-imperialist movement of the Chinese people. The appeal called on the working class of the bourgeois West to fight against the attempts of the imperialists to organize an anti-Soviet military campaign {1021} .

At the call of the communist parties of Europe and America, anti-war demonstrations, strikes of dock workers, workers of military factories protesting against the shipment of weapons to Japan took place in many cities. The Committee of Friends of China, set up on the initiative of the Communist Parties of the USA, Britain, Holland, and other countries, rendered enormous assistance to the Chinese people in their just struggle against the Japanese invaders. In addition to raising funds to help the Chinese people, the committee led the organization of the boycott of Japanese goods.

Thus, the Japanese invasion of China caused the revolutionary progressive forces everywhere to become active against the imperialists' preparations for a new war, the formation of its center in the Far East, and attempts to turn Manchuria into a springboard for an attack on the world's first socialist state.

In connection with the rapid growth of fascism in Europe, the danger of war increased. By the very course of events, the German

working class and its Communist Party were brought to the forefront of the anti-war and anti-fascist struggle.

Of great importance at that time was the idea of convening an international anti-war congress, supported by the Comintern. On April 27, 1932, the Political Commission of the ECCI set up a preparatory commission and sent a corresponding letter {1022} to the Communist Parties . The international initiative committee for the preparation of the congress included the most prominent progressive figures: A. Barbusse, M. Gorky, T. Dreiser, P. Langevin, G. Mann, M. Andersen-Nekse, B. Russell, R. Rolland, General A. Sandino , Sen Katayama, E. Sinclair, A. Einstein, and others. In its appeal, the committee called on "all women and men, regardless of their party or trade union affiliation, all proletarian, cultural, educational and socio-political organizations to unite to hold a large international congress of the struggle against war" {1023}.

It was a desire to rally against the war not only supporters of the communist parties, but also all parties and organizations interested in maintaining peace.

However, the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Workers' International, F. Adler (July 6, 1932), and then the bureau of the Executive Committee of the International (July 23, 1932), opposed the convocation of the congress, qualifying it as a "communist maneuver", supposedly conceived "primarily for the struggle with the socialist parties" {1024} . They endorsed the decision of those parties that sabotaged the anti-war congress and declared that they "recognize this position as correct" {1025} . However, the leaders of the Social Democracy were forced to take into account the growth in the masses of anti-war sentiment and sympathy for the USSR. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Workers' International in Zurich on May 19-20, 1932, they first noted the threat of an anti-Soviet war and declared the solidarity of the workers with the Soviet Union if it was attacked{1026} . The social democratic parties addressed their own governments [315] with good appeals to pursue a policy of peace and disarmament. They led a campaign to collect signatures on a petition for disarmament in order to present these signatures to the

League of Nations. Although this campaign was of some importance in creating anti-war public opinion, in general, the policy of the Social Democracy continued to unfold in line with bourgeois pacifism, and the right-wing leaders of the Social Democracy, as before, participated in anti-Soviet campaigns and accused the USSR of aggressive intentions, thereby helping bourgeoisie and diverting the attention of the masses from the real sources of danger of war.

Thanks to the active work of the Communist Parties, their affiliated organizations and other progressive associations, the campaign for the convening of a world anti-war congress reached out to a broader mass than previous campaigns. In the summer of 1932, at anti-war rallies and meetings, the working people adopted resolutions against the imperialist war, elected delegates to the congress, established anti-war committees, on the basis of which district, district and national committees were formed. They managed to create even in many countries where the Communist parties were in an illegal position. By the beginning of the Congress, there were 35 national and more than 1,000 local anti-war committees {1027}.

The bourgeoisie excelled in slander and attacks on the participants in the movement. Anti-war meetings and conferences were banned in a number of countries. The Swiss and British authorities did not allow the congress to be held in their countries.

The World Anti-War Congress took place on August 27-29, 1932, in Amsterdam. It was attended by 2,200 delegates from 29 countries and hundreds of guests. The most numerous were the delegations of Germany - 759 people, France - 585 people and Holland - 458 people {1028} . The Soviet delegation was denied visas to enter Holland, and its members had to address the congress by radio. The majority of congress delegates - 1865 people - are workers, 249 are representatives of the intelligentsia, 72 are peasants. According to party affiliation, the delegates were divided as follows: communists - 830 people, social democrats - 291, independent socialists - 24, representatives of other parties - 10 people and over 1000 - non-party {1029}. The congress represented more than 30 million people of different social status, different political views, but striving for peace and curbing fascism.

In his report, A. Barbusse stressed that the main goal of the congress, which is open to all parties, is to unite the broad masses against the imperialist war, not only communists, but also social democrats, members of trade unions, pacifists - everyone who stands for peace.

Calling for the strengthening of the anti-war movement, the delegates exposed the imperialists' preparations for a world war and an attack on the USSR, rejected malicious fabrications about "red imperialism", and highly appreciated the consistent peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union.

The manifesto of the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress called for the creation of a "collective mass barrier against war." It stated: "Congress sees salvation only in the unity of action of the workers, peasants and all the exploited and oppressed on the globe." He emphasized the vital need to "create a united front of all the oppressed throughout the world" and called on the masses as "the only irresistible force in the terrifying chaos of modernity to rise in close disciplined [316] ranks against this chaos and raise their powerful voice against it" {1030}

Closing the congress, A. Barbusse summed up its most important results: "His strength and dignity lies in the fact that, having avoided the terrible trap of official pacifism, which sows illusions and turns healthy forces to fruitless theorizing, divorced from reality ... brought the question of war to the ground , considering it as a question about people bleeding" {1031} .

To lead the struggle for peace, the Amsterdam Congress created a permanent World Committee for the Struggle Against War of 115 people, which included A. Barbusse, D. Bernal, P. Vaillant-Couturier, M. Gorky, G. Miglioli, R. Rolland, Saint Katayama, E. Stasova, K. Zetkin, N. Shvernik, A. Einstein and others.

Despite the fact that the work and decisions of the congress still showed an excessive sharpening of the blow against the official line of the Social Democracy and the influence of certain sectarian attitudes was felt, the main provisions proclaimed in Amsterdam were in the interests of mobilizing all anti-war forces.

The trade union and women's conferences held during the congress, meetings of peasant delegates, pacifists, youth, writers, and doctors were influenced by him. They also said their resolute "no" to the imperialist war.

Much attention was paid to the tasks of the anti-war struggle by the 12th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The main report delivered by O. Kuusinen noted the further intensification of the military preparations of the capitalist powers; the attempts of the German monopolists to join the ranks of the imperialist predators who are plundering the world; the orientation of aggressive plans primarily against the USSR and China; the emerging desire of the imperialists to take the Land of Soviets in pincers from the east and west {1032} .

The XII Plenum of the ECCI stressed with particular force the task of defending the USSR and the Chinese revolution, called on the Communist Parties to intensify the struggle against the threat of an imperialist war, actively respond to all anti-Soviet campaigns, popularize the peace policy of the USSR, systematically wage an ideological struggle against chauvinism and nationalism and its extreme form - fascism, to propagate proletarian internationalism, to expose every measure of preparation for war. The significance of the united front tactic was specifically pointed out, with the help of which the Communist parties could involve the unemployed, youth, women, peasants, and everyone who, although not sharing the views of the Communists, was ready to resist the imperialist massacre {1033} in the anti-war movement .

The Comintern and the Communist Parties sought to develop the anti-war movement on a broad social basis. Summing up the results of the Amsterdam Congress, the magazine Rundschau (an organ of the ECCI) wrote in an editorial: "This is not about the cause of one party, but about a truly mass movement, embracing all the forces that want to fight against the imperialist war."

The Political Secretariat of the ECCI recommended that the bodies created by the Amsterdam Congress be given a broad non-partisan character and "lead [317] and influence them by persuasion" {1034} .

This instruction was put into practice. Only in the last months of 1932 were there an International Conference for the Peace of Delegates from Enterprises and Trade Unions in Amsterdam, and a congress of the International League of Women for Peace and Freedom in Grenoble. The movement to create anti-war committees and hold national congresses in defense of peace, for the rallying of anti-fascists, intensified.

A characteristic example of international solidarity was the actions of the Communist Parties of France and Germany. In May 1932, the Central Committee of the KKE called for the launching of the "Anti-Fascist Action" campaign, and in July an anti-fascist united front congress was held in Berlin. In October, the Communist Parties of Germany and France published a joint declaration, which called on the working people of these countries to unite their efforts against chauvinism and nationalist propaganda, against fascism {1035} . On October 31, 1932, a grandiose international rally was held in the Hall of Bouillett in Paris, at which M. Thorez and E. Telman, who had illegally arrived in France, spoke.

The PCF, KKE and other European communist parties exposed the conspiracy of the Western powers in Geneva at the end of 1932, when, under the guise of an attempt to restore Germany in equal rights, these powers took care, first of all, of her equal rights to armaments and thereby helped to free the hands of German militarism. Then, on December 30, 1932, near Essen (Germany), representatives of the communist parties of Austria, England, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, France, and Czechoslovakia gathered for a conference. It decided to intensify work on the international rallying of the working people, to launch the mobilization of the masses against the production and transportation of military materials in connection with the increased danger of military intervention against the USSR and Japan's attack on China, to strengthen and expand the ties between the Communist Parties,{1036}.

Especially burning was the problem of creating a broad front of anti-war forces with the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany and the emergence of a hotbed of war in Europe. The Comintern warned

that Hitler's government is a government of ruthless struggle not only against the German proletariat, but also against world socialism, it is "a government of preparing a revanchist war of German imperialism against Poland and France and provocations against the USSR ..." {1037} . The Communists explained to the masses that German fascism had war as its goal and was "the bearer of imperialist war" {1038}. They pointed out that with the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, new difficulties arose in the struggle to prevent an imperialist war, and therefore an even more energetic and persistent mobilization of the forces of the working people was necessary.

Anti-war meetings organized on the initiative of the communist parties became one of the forms of international rallying of the working people. For example, in September 1933, a meeting of Polish, Czech and German miners and metalworkers took place near Moravsk-Ostrava {1039} . In October 1933, in Metz (France), the delegates of the railroad workers of France, Belgium, and the Saar discussed [318] measures to combat the war, in particular, the question of a boycott of transportation for Japan, Germany, Austria, and Poland {1040} .

Communist workers, members of the mass organizations adjoining the Comintern, together with other supporters of peace, painstakingly and persistently worked to expand the network of anti-war committees, participated in organizing and holding national anti-war congresses. In France, where the anti-war movement reached its greatest extent, by the spring of 1933 there were already about 500 local committees {1041} .

In early March 1933, a national anti-war congress was held in London, attended by 1,500 delegates representing 1.5 million workers. He expressed the will of the advanced sections of the British working people to fight against the imperialist war. The delegates enthusiastically received a telegram from the crew of the steamer "Stanleyville", which refused to carry military cargo to Japan {1042} . In the same month, a congress was held in Montevideo by the South American fighters against the war {1043} .

In April 1933, the Scandinavian Labor Conference was held in Copenhagen, 400 delegates of which represented 35 trade union organizations and other workers' unions of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland {1044} . In June 1933 anti-war conferences were held in Holland and Bulgaria {1045} .

An important role in the development of the movement against war and fascism was played by the European Anti-Fascist Congress, which took place on June 4-6, 1933, in Paris in the Salle Pleyel. Many organizations actively participated in its preparation. The 3,500 congress delegates from all European countries represented more than 3 million working people—communists, part of the Social Democrats, progressive intelligentsia, and broad strata of the non-Party {1046} .

The decisions of the congress were based on the idea of forming a united front based on the rallying of all anti-fascists and opponents of the war without distinction of party, trade union or religious affiliation. The Congress did much to expose the fascist terror in Germany and the aggressive aspirations of the Hitler government. In the document he adopted, it was noted that the offensive of fascism meant a direct transition to imperialist aggression and the struggle against it was closely intertwined with the struggle against war. It was instructed "in order to unite all forces against fascism and war, to establish close business relations between anti-fascist committees and committees for the struggle against war" {1047} .

The anti-fascist Central Committee created by the Congress became the initiator of many anti-fascist and anti-war campaigns: the boycott of German courts in ports, protest demonstrations in front of German embassies and consulates, the sending of Marxist literature to Germany, etc. Anti-fascist committees and committees for the fight against war increasingly acted together. Later, P. Togliatti wrote that "from the time of the congress in the Hall of Pleyel, a movement began that, without being associated with any party, created in at least one country - in France, the ground on which the workers and grassroots functionaries of the Social Democratic parties and reformist trade unions began to draw closer to the

communist workers and leading cadres of the Communist Party” {1048} . [319]

In August 1933, the anti-fascist Central Committee and the World Committee for the Struggle against War merged into the World Committee for the Struggle against War and Fascism. The movement headed by him, known as the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement, set itself the task of rallying all anti-fascists and opponents of the imperialist war on the basis of a united front.

A notable phenomenon in the international anti-war struggle was the American Congress against Fascism and War, held in New York on September 29-October 1, 1933. It was attended by more than 2,600 delegates from 35 states {1049} . Arriving at the congress, A. Barbusse made an impassioned appeal to the American working people "to join the movement against fascism and the imperialist war" {1050} . Congress formed the American League Against War and Fascism. A year later, the league, despite the withdrawal of some organizations from it, managed to convene a second congress, whose delegates represented 1,807,000 Americans {1051} .

In September-October 1933, the Far East Anti-War Congress was held in Shanghai, the Australian Anti-War Congress, which was attended by delegates from 340 different organizations, the World Youth Congress against the War, which brought together 1,100 delegates from 34 countries, the International Student Conference against War and Fascism, and others { 1052} .

In most countries, a powerful wave of meetings, rallies, and demonstrations of protest against the Nazi terror swept through. In December 1933, when the fascist court in Leipzig was preparing the verdict against G. Dimitrov, there were days in Paris during which 20 demonstrations took place in the workers' districts. The movement involved not only communists, but also workers - social democrats, members of reformist and Christian trade unions. Significant forces of the intelligentsia became active participants in the anti-fascist and anti-war struggle.

With the advent of fascism, on the one hand, and the growth of the anti-war movement of workers, on the other, it became increasingly

difficult for right-wing socialist leaders to ignore changes in the mood and psychology of the masses. At the Paris session of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Workers' International in August 1933, they were compelled to acknowledge the turn of the rank and file Social Democrats towards the struggle against the war danger, which had been intensified many times over by fascism. The left current, represented at the session by groups of left socialists from France, Italy, Austria, youth socialist organizations in Spain and Belgium, demanded agreements with the communists for practical action against fascism and war. Their speeches testified to the fact that the desire for unity of action with the communists was growing in the social democratic ranks. However, the leaders of the Socialist International categorically rejected this. F.{1053}.

The Communists, aware of their role and responsibility to humanity, persistently pursued an anti-war policy. At the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (1933), new important conclusions were drawn, in particular, the proposition was formulated that by its struggle the proletariat [320] is capable of delaying the war. "... The peace policy of the Soviet Union," O. Kuusinen said in the report, "may, if not prevent a war altogether, then still significantly complicate the military policy of the imperialist enemies of the USSR and perhaps, even somewhat delay the start of this war, primarily on condition active and effective support for his peaceful policy by the proletariat of the capitalist countries" {1054}. The plenum spoke out against the fatalistic thesis that it was impossible to prevent an imperialist war and put forward the idea of the revolutionary influence of the struggle for peace and the promotion of its growth and the strengthening of the forces of socialism.

In accordance with the conclusions of the CPSU(b) and other communist parties, the plenum named the main centers of the war - Japan and Germany. His documents noted that the League of Nations, from which Japan and Germany had left and which Italy was about to leave, under certain conditions, could contribute to the fight against warmongers. The question was seriously raised that the Communist Parties should learn to fully expose the bourgeois

slander on the foreign policy of the USSR and reveal to the masses the peaceful nature of its measures.

Along with this, the Comintern has not yet made a turn towards bringing the fight against the war danger to the fore, while continuing to orient itself towards directly socialist revolutions. The recognition of the necessity of a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat distinguishes every communist and genuine revolutionary from reformists and compromisers, but that was not the point. Life brought to the fore the anti-fascist, anti-war, general democratic tasks, through the solution of which lay the path to the socialist stage of the struggle. At the same time, the majority of working people, anti-fascists in the capitalist countries were not yet ready to fight for the overthrow of capitalism, but were vitally interested in the fight against fascism and war.

The 13th Plenum of the ECCI continued to sharpen the blow against the Social Democracy, which narrowed the possibilities of creating a broad anti-war front. Nevertheless, the conclusions of the thirteenth plenum on questions of combating the war and on the class essence of fascism already contained the seed of new important decisions aimed at uniting the forces fighting against fascism and the war.

In connection with the rapid growth of fascism in Germany, the Communist Party called on the masses to unite, explaining to them that "Hitler is war", that his coming to power means a national catastrophe for the country. The German working class widely supported the KPD, which received about 6 million votes in the Reichstag elections in November 1932. However, in Germany - on one of the decisive sectors of the front of the struggle against fascism and war - primarily because of the social democratic policy of splitting the proletarian movement, despite the heroism and selflessness of the communists, it was not possible to rally all the anti-fascists who could resist the forces of obscurantism, reaction, and militarism.

Thus, the events in Germany revealed the main factors that prevented the anti-fascist and anti-war rallying of the masses. Fascist terror led to the fact that the positions of the KKE were significantly

weakened. All attempts by the German communists to achieve unity of action with other parties and organizations ran into resistance from the right-wing Social Democrats, who, by their actions, contributed to the preservation of the split in the working class, and, consequently, to the strengthening of the Nazi fascist dictatorship. [321]

3. The turn of the communist parties to new forms of struggle

By the mid-1930s, the growing danger of a second world war demanded a new strategic orientation from the communists. An objective need arose to launch further struggle for a united anti-fascist front in order to preserve peace.

From the first days of the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, the Central Committee of the KKE gave a correct assessment of its class character and the aggressive essence of its foreign and domestic policy. The slogan of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship by a united front of the working class and its allies was put forward as the immediate goal.

At the end of January and in February 1933, workers' demonstrations took place throughout Germany, in which communists, social democrats, and members of trade unions who opposed the Nazi regime took part. The struggle for the creation of an anti-fascist front was complicated by the fact that after the provocative arson of the Reichstag, widespread repressions began against the communists and all opponents of the Nazi regime. The preservation of the KKE in those conditions was the most important prerequisite for the development of the movement of the progressive forces of the German nation against the transformation of the fascist state into the main center of the Second World War.

In an atmosphere of deep illegality and constant attacks on the cadres of the party, on its leading and grassroots organizations, the KKE launched a heroic struggle for its existence, adapted the organizational structure and forms of leadership to the changed conditions.

In mid-May 1933, the Politburo decided to organize a foreign bureau in Paris consisting of F. Dahlem, V. Florin and V. Pick {1055} . His tasks included publishing the central organ of the party, the Rote Fahne newspaper, ensuring border crossings and organizing the work of German communists who had emigrated, maintaining contact with the ECCI, and promoting, together with fraternal parties, the development of a movement of solidarity with German anti-fascists.

The leadership that remained inside the country included D. Sher, G. Schubert, F. Schulze, and W. Ulbricht. They directed the work of party organizations and the anti-fascist resistance movement. Members of the Politburo, who were in Paris and Berlin, maintained close contact with them. The party managed to establish contact with Telman, who, being in the dungeons of the Moabit prison in Berlin, provided all possible assistance with advice and recommendations.

In the autumn of 1933, the leadership of the KKE decided, for security reasons, to transfer to Paris some of the members of the party apparatus who had remained in the country. Of the leaders of the party in Germany, there was only D. Scher, whose task was to form the underground leadership of the party. The organ of the Politburo, located in Paris, directed the work of party organizations in Germany from October 1933 to March 1935 {1056} . In the autumn of 1933 there were 48 local party districts {1057} in the country .

The VKP(b) and other fraternal parties provided great assistance to the KKE during its transition to an illegal position. They gave her rich experience of underground work. The cadres of the KKE for work inside the country were trained in the international Leninist school of the Comintern. The communist parties of Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark assisted in establishing KKE bases on the German borders. and in organizing border crossings. [322]

After the Reichstag fire, representatives of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KKE again tried to establish contact with the leadership of the SPD and the Association of Trade Unions. The attempts came to nothing. In the Central Council of Trade Unions,

they were not accepted at all, and the SPD board declared that joint actions with the KPD were inappropriate, since they jeopardized the legality of the party {1058} . Such a line of government in the conditions of fascist terror led to the fact that many grassroots social democratic organizations began to disintegrate. A significant part of the SPD members, disillusioned with their leaders, stopped all political activity.

Fighting for the implementation of the strategy and tactics that were carried out on the scale of the international communist movement, the responsible officials of the Comintern supported the Marxist-Leninist forces in the leadership of the KKE in every possible way. Thus, the ECCI, its presidium, the secretariat, and the political commissions discussed questions of the anti-fascist struggle in Germany many times and gave valuable advice. In the speeches of G. Dimitrov from the end of September to the end of December 1933 in the fascist imperial court, where he was falsely accused of setting fire to the Reichstag, the political situation in Germany was analyzed, the reasons for the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in the country were indicated, and the Nazi slander on the communist movement was exposed. "Mass work, mass struggle, mass resistance, a united front and no adventurism - this is the alpha and omega of communist tactics"{1059} , he said in one of his speeches.

In the autumn of 1934, G. Dimitrov spoke about his attitude to the slanderous accusation of the Communists of setting fire to the Reichstag. "During the police proceedings, as well as during the judicial investigation, my position was as follows: first of all, I sought to politically refute the accusation in connection with the burning of the Reichstag and explain that such an act could not be committed by the Communists, that this could be the work of provocateurs or political madmen. The burning of the Reichstag is an attack on the German working class and is directed against the Communist Party. From this it follows, both factually and politically, that I personally, as a communist, and especially as a leading Bulgarian communist, could have nothing in common with this matter and in fact had nothing in common" {1060} .

The campaign connected with the Leipzig Trial, the defense of the communists accused there, was an important moment in the struggle of the KKE against fascism.

The Leipzig trial was the trial of German fascism. This was the merit of G. Dimitrov. Handcuffed, deprived of information about events in the world, he managed to turn the dock into a tribune of the anti-fascist struggle, showed himself as a revolutionary of boundless courage, a brilliant polemicist and orator. In those days, the name of Dimitrov for millions of people became a symbol of the steadfastness and fearlessness of the communists, a symbol of the struggle against fascism.

The Leipzig trial received wide repercussions throughout the world and contributed to the activation of anti-fascist forces in Germany and many other countries. Communists, social democrats, members of trade unions, as well as progressive representatives of the intelligentsia actively came out in defense of G. Dimitrov and demanded his release. The World Congress for the Defense of the Victims of Fascism published in 1933 the Brown Book on the Reichstag Fire and the Hitler Terror, and in the following year, the Brown Book Dimitrov vs. Goering. Exposing the true arsonists." They were translated into various languages and distributed in many countries, including illegally in Germany.

At the end of July 1934, the plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE worked out a resolution that aimed the party at creating a united anti-fascist front of the working people. As concrete measures, it was recommended to negotiate with social democratic organizations on a joint struggle, to take the initiative in launching a campaign for the restoration of free trade unions, to work among members of mass fascist organizations, and to establish contacts with the middle strata of the population {1061} .

In carrying out these decisions, the KKE encountered serious recurrences of sectarianism and "leftist" doctrinairism, which hindered the cause of creating a popular front against Hitler. In January 1935, the political secretariat of the ECCI encouraged members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KKE,

representatives of the leadership within the country, members of the Berlin party organization and the Communist Youth League of Germany to discuss the behavior of sectarian elements and thereby helped the KKE to restore the collectivity of the party leadership. It was proposed to develop and implement measures for cooperation with social democratic groups and organizations, as well as once again try to reach an agreement with the SPD émigré board in Prague on joint actions against the fascist dictatorship {1062} .

In 1935 the KKE again suffered heavy losses. Communication with local organizations was interrupted, turnouts and illegal apartments failed. According to the data of the KKE, out of 422 functionaries, members of the central and district committees, leaders of mass organizations of the party, 219 were arrested and 24 people were killed {1063} . It turned out to be impossible to create a new party leadership inside the country, since there were not enough trained personnel, and the Gestapo intensified surveillance of all those suspected of belonging to the KKE. In accordance with the new distribution of duties within the Politburo, the leadership of party organizations in Germany was entrusted to F. Dahlem and W. Ulbricht, who were in Prague. The remaining members of the Politburo moved to Moscow, which became the seat of the party leadership.

The anti-fascists captured by the Gestapo were replaced by new fighters. The class consciousness and high morale of the communists, based on Marxist-Leninist hardening and party education, manifested itself in unceasing resistance to Hitlerism even when a few people remained in the organization who had no connection with other groups and party leadership.

The famous German poet Johannes Becher authored the poem "Where was Germany ...". Answering this question, he emphasized that the best people in Germany were then in prisons and concentration camps. And then he continued:

But in the prison cells, in the casemates,

Where the corpses of the mutilated, crucified

The executioners silently curse

And where pity calls for vengeance,

There a new Germany was born,

There the heart of my homeland beat! {1064} [324]

Despite heavy losses, the German Communist Party continued to operate. Party organizations completed the transition to an illegal position, reorganized their forces and waged an anti-fascist struggle using the most diverse methods and forms. In contact with the Social Democrats, non-Party workers, peasants, and other working people, they often created common cells and resistance groups.

The selfless struggle of the communists against the fascist regime contributed to the formation of the underground Popular Front, which corresponded to the guidelines of the Comintern. A part of the Social Democrats, who did not agree with the capitulation of their leadership to fascism, also joined this front. On behalf of the supporters of the Popular Front, which advocated peace, freedom, and bread, in December 1936 an "Appeal to the German people" was secretly published. Under it were the signatures of the Communists - W. Pick, W. Florin, W. Ulbricht, F. Dahlem, W. Münzberger, the Social Democrats - W. Brandt, R. Breitsheid and outstanding representatives of the progressive intelligentsia - L. Feuchtwanger, A. Zweig, G. Manna {1065}

In February 1934, an attempted fascist coup took place in France, which was thwarted by the decisive actions of the working class, which rallied around itself the vast majority of the people. The Communists saw in this fact favorable opportunities for new efforts to unite the opponents of fascism and the war on a general democratic platform.

Thanks to the French Communist Party and its skillful approach to the socialist workers, who showed an increasing desire for joint anti-fascist actions, in July 1934 a pact was concluded on the unity of action of the communist and socialist (SFIO) parties. The PCF went along with many wishes of the SFIO, but achieved the main thing: both parties pledged to take effective measures against fascism and

reaction. For the first time after a long and sharp struggle, the communists and socialists came to an agreement that formalized a united workers' front against fascism.

The events of 1934 in Austria served as a serious lesson for progressive forces, for the international working-class movement. Its Communist Party warned that the fascist danger was growing in the country and that joint action by all workers was needed against it. But the forces of the Communist Party were weak, since the Social Democrats led the majority of the working class and for a long time insisted that it was only necessary to act when the time came, they kept the proletariat from mass demonstrations against impudent fascism.

In February 1934, when events reached the point of an acute armed clash between the working people and fascism, the centrist Social Democracy proved unable to organize a rebuff. The barricade battles of the Austrian proletariat ended in its defeat. If the example of France made the workers of the whole world convinced of the possibility of a successful rebuff to fascism, the events in Austria showed how pernicious the reformist policy of avoiding a decisive struggle. At the same time, as a result of these events, the rank and file of social democracy began to realize the need for unity of action and cooperation with the communists, up to the armed struggle against fascism.

The general strike in October 1934 in Spain, especially the uprising of the workers in Asturias, confirmed the vitality of the solidarity of the workers in the fight against fascism, the need to overcome sectarianism, guildism, claims to monopoly leadership of the movement, characteristic [325] of anarchists and social democrats. Practice proved the possibility of a united front of communists, socialists, and anarcho-syndicalists.

A turn towards the policy of a united workers' front based on an anti-fascist platform was also made by the Communist Party of Italy, which in August 1934 achieved an agreement on unity of action with the socialists. The struggle for a united front became a characteristic

feature of the strategy and tactics of the communist parties in other capitalist countries of Europe.

During the preparations for the 7th Congress of the Comintern, the communists creatively revised outdated views and looked for new solutions. G. Dimitrov, D. Manuilsky, O. Kuusinen and other comrades in the Executive Committee of the Comintern played an important role in working out the new orientation. They raised questions of programmatic importance: the strategic goal of the communist and workers' movement in the most difficult conditions; the foundations of the unity of the workers' front; a change in attitude towards social democracy, in the ranks of which, under the conditions of the onset of fascism, differentiation intensified; the need to expand the united workers' front through alliance with the non-proletarian strata; launching a struggle against leftist-sectarian mistakes in the communist parties, etc. {1066} .

The Popular Front slogan, put forward by the French Communists and supported by other Communist Parties, was an important contribution to the development of a new orientation, to the development of the Leninist idea of an alliance between the working class and other sections of the working people. The Popular Front, the PCF pointed out, is a militant alliance of all the proletarian and democratic forces of the country for the purpose of curbing, disarming, and dissolving the fascist leagues, defending the democratic rights and freedoms of the working people, and satisfying the vital economic interests of all who were oppressed by the "two hundred families" {1067} . For the first time in the history of the revolutionary struggle, the unification of broad democratic forces was planned. The main goals of the Popular Front corresponded to the passionate aspirations of various sections of the population: to repulse the worst capitalist reaction - fascism and militarism, to protect the rights of the masses.

The initiative measures taken by the communist parties and their development of a new orientation were based on a deep understanding of the essence and prospects of the anti-war struggle. The communists approached it as a general democratic movement that could play a huge role in international events to create an anti-

war front, as the broadest coalition of democratic forces in which other sections of the population rally around the proletariat. G. Dimitrov, evaluating the experience of the anti-war struggle, pointed out that in preparing and carrying out anti-war measures, the Communists acted correctly, addressing directly the working masses, the Social Democrats. But it was wrong that they immediately concentrated "all efforts against the Social Democracy as such, and especially against the Left Social Democracy, without concretizing and without differentiating the pitiful "left" demagogues from the sincere left elements that stirred up as early as 1931-32-33. It is clear, comrades, that we here did one thing with our right hand: we had very good intentions to stir up our parties, to organize millions for the struggle, but, on the other hand, with our left hand we destroyed what we wanted, interfered with it.{1068} . Now the communist parties sought to remove all obstacles to the expansion of the anti-war movement, to find contact with the Social Democrats, among whom the number of left elements was growing.

Thanks to the actions of the communists, the desire for unity became a characteristic feature of anti-war activities. The call for the rallying of all proletarian and democratic forces was made in London in February 1934 at a congress against hunger, fascism, and war, which brought together representatives of about 800 organizations {1069} . This idea was also permeated with the first US conference of the Society of Friends of the USSR, held in March. The Society of Friends of the USSR in the USA by this time had 10,000 members. The 980 conference delegates represented the most diverse sections of the working people and the intelligentsia. Having paid great attention to the issues of military danger, explaining the peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union, the conference called for the unification of all opponents of the war {1070} .

Unions and societies of friends of the USSR in other countries actively joined the anti-war struggle. In France, by the autumn of 1934, such a society already had 310 local organizations with 12,000 members and published its own illustrated magazine {1071} .

In connection with the approach of the 20th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, the World Committee against War

and Fascism launched a great agitation and propaganda work, explaining to the masses the causes of the last war and the threat of a new one. The committee's organ, published in French ("Front Mondial") and German ("Die Weltfront"), skillfully exposed the perpetrators of the First World War and the main instigators of the Second World War. The Committee held anti-war conferences in France, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, and an anti-war congress in Mexico {1072} . In a number of countries, the creation of anti-war committees and the strengthening of the previously existing ones were successfully going on.

The creation of a united workers' front gave a strong impetus to the development of the anti-war movement and anti-war committees in France. In the spring of 1934, there were 1,000 such committees in the country, which included not only communists and non-party people, but also socialists (including 150 sections of the SFIO). By November, the number of anti-war committees had risen to 1,600 {1073}.

In many countries, the creation of new committees ran into serious difficulties, in particular, opposition from the right-wing Social Democracy, which continued to characterize these committees as the work of communists alone.

The manifesto, adopted at a meeting of the Bureau of the World Committee against War and Fascism and the Youth Committee against War and Fascism in July 1934, spoke of the general democratic nature of the struggle, the task of gathering "all the forces of the working people for the struggle, regardless of their party affiliation ... movements are wide open to all organizations and currents that reject war and fascism" {1074} .

The Comintern and the Communist Parties were the most active participants in the anti-war campaign associated with the 20th anniversary of the start of the First World War. The communist press showed the prehistory of the war and the extent of the damage caused by it, exposed the intrigues of imperialist diplomacy after the war, revealed the economic, political, ideological, and military-technical aspects of the imperialists' preparations for a new war,

focusing special attention on Japan and Germany. At the same time, it promoted the consistently peaceful policy of the Soviet Union, showed that it corresponded to the vital interests of all peace-loving [327]forces on earth. When the USSR joined the League of Nations in September 1934, the Communists explained that this step was a victory for the peace-loving policy of the Soviet state, which was striving to use the turn in the policy of a number of capitalist countries towards rapprochement with it in order to increase resistance to the outbreak of war, to isolate its main instigators.

The Communist Parties supported the campaign for investigating the activities of "arms manufacturers", which has reached significant proportions in the USA, Britain, and some other countries. Articles, pamphlets, and books by prominent figures of science and culture contained demands to curb arms manufacturers and dealers. Such works have become widespread. A vivid example of the participation of the Communists in the campaign was the testimony in May 1935 of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain G. Pollit in the commission on the private production of weapons and trade in them. Based on facts not known to the public, they became a real indictment against monopolies {1075} .

The campaign for the convening of the World Congress of Women Against the War was also timed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. In the course of its preparation, an attempt was made to unite the anti-war efforts of women's organizations and unions of various political directions. The initiative committee for convening the congress invited the leadership of the Socialist Workers' International to take part in the movement and in the work of the congress itself. After the leaders of the Social Democracy rejected this proposal under the previous pretext that it was a "communist maneuver", on June 15, 1934, the initiative committee addressed an open letter to E. Vandervelde and F. Adler. He again invited the Socialist Workers' International to participate in the congress, in the national women's anti-war committees and assured that socialist women would be met in a comradely manner.{1076} . But the right-wing leaders of the Social

Democracy once again renounced united action in the anti-war struggle.

The World Women's Congress against War and Fascism, held on August 4-7, 1934, in Paris, testified to the expansion of the circle of organizations, movements, groups that participated in the anti-war movement. Many pacifist and charitable organizations were represented (341 delegates), cultural and educational organizations (132 delegates), the movement of committees against war and fascism, that is, the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement (102 delegates), the revolutionary trade union opposition (more than 100 delegates), reformist trade unions (80 delegates), Mezhrabpom (34 delegates), communist parties and Komsomol (94 delegates), socialist parties and their youth organizations (20 delegates), English cooperatives (27 delegates), Christian social parties (16 delegates), etc. [1077]. The manifesto adopted at the congress contained an impassioned call for the creation of a united front of all those who oppose fascism and war.

Thus, the Comintern and the Communist Parties, relying on the accumulated experience of the anti-fascist and anti-war movement, came to the realization of the need to develop an integral program for the preservation of peace. They were guided by the fact that such a program should constitute the most important element of the popular front movement and take into account the expansion of its social basis.

The historical merit in developing a program for the struggle of the working people against war and fascism belongs to the 7th Congress of the Comintern, which worked from July 25 to August 20, 1935, in Moscow. The participants of the congress [328] listened to a report on the activities of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (V. Pik) and reports: "The offensive of fascism and the tasks of the Communist International in the struggle for the unity of the working class against fascism" (G. Dimitrov), "Preparation for an imperialist war and tasks Communist International" (P. Tolyatti), "Results of the construction of socialism in the USSR" (D. Manuilsky). The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and representatives of other sections of the

Comintern took an active part in the development of the main theoretical provisions of the reports.

Analyzing the position and alignment of class forces in the world, the congress noted the historical significance of the victory of socialism in the USSR. The CPSU(b), presenting a report on the results of socialist construction in the USSR, reported to the international proletariat on what had been done in the country to turn it into a mighty industrial power, an invincible stronghold of socialism and peace on earth. The congress resolution stated: the victory of socialism in the USSR means "a new major shift in the balance of class forces on a world scale in favor of socialism, to the detriment of capitalism. .. » {1078}.

The 7th Congress of the Comintern devoted much attention to characterizing the fascist dictatorship and the fascist danger. It drew a fundamentally important conclusion: the coming of fascism to power was not the usual replacement of one bourgeois government by another, but the replacement of one state form of class rule by the bourgeoisie with another—an open terrorist dictatorship. This put an end to the harmful equating of various bourgeois parliamentary regimes with fascism and provided a scientific orientation for understanding the contradictions between fascism and bourgeois democracy.

The congress emphasized the dangerous role of German fascism, which embodied the most reactionary and most misanthropic features of the fascist movement in general. German fascism, acting as the shock fist of the international counter-revolution, G. Dimitrov said in his report, is the main force of world fascist reaction, the main instigator of a new imperialist war {1079}. Describing fascism as a huge step back in comparison with bourgeois democracy, as a monstrous offspring of decaying capitalism, he noted: "... the fascist counter-revolution attacks bourgeois democracy, seeking to establish a regime of the most barbaric exploitation and suppression of the working people. Today, the working masses in a number of capitalist countries have to choose specifically for today not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism .

The 7th Congress considered the creation of a united workers' front and a broad popular front against fascism and war to be the most important task of the communist parties. The content of the reports of G. Dimitrov, P. Togliatti, V. Pik, the speeches of M. Thorez, G. Podlit, Y. Lensky and many other delegates was subordinated to one thing - to find out ways to successfully create a united workers' and people's front, which, by definition of the congress, the main weapon of the working people in the fight against fascism and war.

After evaluating the experience of the struggle of the Communist Parties of France, Spain, and some others for the creation of a united front, the congress in its resolution proclaimed: "The defense of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, its defense against fascism must be the starting point [329] and constitute the main content of the united front of the workers in all capitalist countries" {1081} .

The success of creating a united workers' front, both on an international scale and within individual countries, depended primarily on relations between the communist and social democratic parties. Pointing to the fatal consequences of the Social-Democratic policy of class cooperation with the bourgeoisie, the delegates noted that under the new conditions the positions of the Social-Democrats began to change, and they began to move to the left.

Developing Lenin's teaching on the alliance of the working class with other sections of the working people, on the connection between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism, the congress comprehensively substantiated the policy of the people's anti-fascist front. He showed that such a front, by uniting the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the working intelligentsia, could defeat fascism, limit the power of capital, and create favorable initial conditions for the struggle for socialism.

The congress put forward the slogan of creating governments of the popular front, while relying on the conclusions of the Comintern, made with the participation of V.I. Lenin, in particular, on the slogan of a "workers' and peasants' government."

The Congress believed that the government of the Popular Front was called upon to undertake decisive measures against fascism and reaction. It must become a force that cuts the roots of the power of monopoly capital. Depending on the specific correlation of class forces in one country or another, the role of the Popular Front government was outlined. In some countries it organizes a rebuff to fascism and reaction without touching the foundations of bourgeois regimes. In countries where a bourgeois-democratic revolution is unfolding, it can become the government of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry, that is, the government of an entire transitional stage in the development of the revolution, which creates the prerequisites for its development into a socialist one. The government of the popular front could also become a kind of transitional form in the imperialist countries, where the oppression of the monopolies has again made the struggle for democratic demands urgent. "Perhaps the government of the united front," said G. Dimitrov, "in a number of countries will turn out to be one of the most important transitional forms." {1082} and pave the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Congress obliged the Communists to support all Popular Front governments fighting against reaction and fascism.

The policy of a united workers' and anti-fascist popular front developed by the 7th Congress of the Comintern, which brought general democratic tasks to the fore, did not mean a rejection of socialist goals. On the contrary, it was precisely through the united workers' and people's front that the path lay at that time for uniting all the working people around the communists, the path for preparing and enlisting the broadest masses in the struggle for socialism.

The conclusions of the congress on questions of the national liberation movement were also of great importance. It was pointed out that in colonial and semi-colonial countries the first step of a truly people's revolution would inevitably be the stage of a national liberation struggle directed primarily against imperialism, "against the growing imperialist exploitation, against cruel enslavement, for the expulsion of the imperialists, for the independence of the

country" {1083} . This determined the main goals of the struggle of the Communist Parties in the oppressed countries. For successful [330]the implementation of the anti-imperialist revolution, the communists must strive to create a united anti-imperialist front. The communist parties were guided by the implementation of a bold policy of rallying into such a front all those who are capable of fighting imperialism, including the national bourgeoisie, whose contradictions with imperialism not only persisted, but in a number of countries became sharply aggravated. Of particular importance for the creation of the anti-imperialist front were the unity of action of the proletariat, in particular the unity of the trade unions, and the alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry, which constituted the majority of the population of the enslaved countries.

The common interest in defeating fascism and imperialism and in preventing a world war created the ground for an alliance between the national liberation movements of the enslaved peoples and the international working-class movement. The Congress obliged all Communist parties to "actively support the national liberation struggle of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples..." {1084} . For this it is necessary to educate the broad working masses of the mother countries and colonies in the spirit of internationalism, intransigence towards nationalism and chauvinism.

The decisions of the congress meant not only a change in tactics and methods of struggle. It was a new political strategy that proved to the working class the ways of approaching the socialist revolution through the anti-fascist struggle, the successful solution of other general democratic tasks.

At the 7th Congress of the Comintern, the policy of the Communists in the struggle for peace was comprehensively considered. P. Tolyatti's report was devoted to a detailed analysis of the problem, in which it was noted that the general line of the communists' struggle against the war had withstood the "test by fire" and remained their main line. But there have been profound changes in the international balance of power that should be taken into account.

In the reports of G. Dimitrov, P. Tolyatti, V. Pieck, a very definite conclusion was drawn: the aggressive forces of international imperialism, primarily the fascist states, had begun direct preparations for a new world war. The Congress showed how great and real the danger of fascist aggression is. Acting as the worst enemy of the working class and all democratic forces within "their own" country, fascism also acted in the foreign policy arena as an instrument of imperialist reaction, threatening the national existence of the peoples of other countries, primarily the USSR. The fascist dictatorship, it was pointed out at the congress, is one of the forms of organizing the rear of the imperialist bourgeoisie for a new war. "Concentrate the fire of our struggle against German fascism, as the main warmonger, the mortal enemy of the Soviet Union and the proletarian revolution," said P. Tolyatti,{1085}.

Emphasizing the anti-Soviet orientation of the military plans of fascism and imperialist reaction, the congress made an important conclusion that in conditions when fascist aggression threatens not only the Soviet Union, but also a number of other countries - Germany's neighbors, when the question of enslaving their peoples is on the agenda, in Europe national liberation wars against the aggressor are possible. The representative of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, J. Schwerma, said: "It is already clear that the attack of Nazi imperialism on Czechoslovakia in the present situation can only be an imperialist offensive war - a war for the redivision of the world, a war for the destruction of the independence of the Czech people, [331]a war for the subjugation of all the peoples of Czechoslovakia to Hitler's fascist dictatorship. The defense of Czechoslovakia against Hitlerite imperialism would, under these conditions, be a just war, for it would be a defensive war waged on the side of the Soviet Union, against the chief representative of the fascist counter- revolution . Delegate of the Communist Party of the Netherlands A. de Leeuv, recalling the words of V. I. Lenin about the possibility of national liberation wars in Europe, which he said back in the years of the First World War, stressed that in a situation where the Nazis seek to enslave many European countries, the Leninist position acquires twice the value of {1087} .

The Congress resolution noted that if any small state is attacked by one or more imperialist states seeking to destroy its national independence, "the war of the national bourgeoisie of such a country, in order to repel this attack, may take on the character of a war of liberation, in which the working class and the Communists of this country cannot but intervene" {1088}. Such a position did not signify unconditional support by the communists for the bourgeois government of a small country subjected to aggression. The proletariat, P. Togliatti pointed out in his concluding speech, skillfully and flexibly combine the defense of the fatherland in the national liberation struggle with the defense of the class interests of the broad masses of the working people, strive for the democratization of the regime, and especially the army, and stop the capitulatory encroachments of the bourgeoisie.

A flexible policy was recommended in relation to the defensive measures of the bourgeois governments. The Communist parties, it was emphasized in the decisions of the congress, should become "in the front ranks of the fighters for national independence and wage the war of liberation to the end, preventing "their" bourgeoisie from making a deal with the attacking powers at the expense of the interests of their country" {1089} .

The congress pointed to the vital interest of the peoples of the countries threatened by fascist aggression in close cooperation and alliance with the USSR, and especially emphasized the idea of the objective coincidence of the foreign policy interests of the first country of socialism with the hopes of the working people of the whole world, with the aspirations of all peace-loving forces.

The Supreme Forum of Communists believed that sharp inter-imperialist contradictions and the increased aggressiveness of fascist states created a situation in which cooperation between the USSR and capitalist powers that were currently interested in maintaining peace, or even with those who did not set themselves immediate goals of conquest, was possible. Considering the disengagement in the policy of the capitalist powers, the congress did not take the standpoint of their equal responsibility for unleashing the war and specifically named the instigators of the aggression. Theoretically

substantiating such a strategy, P. Togliatti recalled the statement of V. I. Lenin about the need for flexible tactics of compromise and the use of contradictions in the camp of the class enemy.

The Congress highly appraised the USSR treaties on mutual assistance with France and Czechoslovakia, as aimed "to rally all the forces that can be involved at this moment in the active defense of peace" {1090} , as the most important step towards creating the foundations of collective security in Europe. [332]

The Comintern identified and named the main factors that made it possible to unite all the forces advocating peace. He raised the question of the need to create a broad front of peace, embracing the working class, the working people, and the democratic strata. In the ranks of the fighters, the communists called on all pacifists who were ready in practice to resist the war. The Congress noted that the anti-war movement is growing, capturing the masses, and more and more comes out not just with good wishes, but for an effective rebuff to warmongers and aggressors. The scope of this movement was evidenced by the fact that in England in the peace plebiscite organized in 1935 by the Society of Friends of the League of Nations, 11.5 million people participated. Communists must be with the masses in order to help them move to positions of active struggle against the war.

The 7th Congress of the Comintern also gave a completely clear answer to the question of the relationship between the struggle for peace and the struggle for the socialist revolution. "We are defending the world," said P. Togliatti, "not because we belong to the number of soft-bodied Tolstoyans, but because we strive to ensure the conditions for the victory of the revolution" {1091} . Thus, the Communists, being the most consistent humanists, considered the struggle for peace, for the prevention of war, as a condition for strengthening the forces of the revolution.

The Congress spoke out against the underestimation of the struggle for peace by the "left" opportunists and Trotskyists, who viewed the war as a means supposedly clearing the way for the revolution.

It was pointed out at the congress that the preservation of peace, even the temporary postponement of war, ensures the further successes of socialism in the USSR, the growth of its economic and political might, and helps to strengthen the positions of the revolutionary proletariat and all anti-war forces. The struggle for peace opens before the communist parties the broadest possibilities for rallying anti-fascists in the popular front, for uniting its allies and all those interested in preventing war around the proletariat.

Rejecting fatalistic notions of the inevitability of war, the 7th Congress of the Comintern pointed to the increased possibilities of fighting for peace. The representative of the CPSU (b) V. Knorin said: "The victory of the October Revolution and the transformation of the USSR into a powerful socialist state, pursuing an active peace policy and attracting to its path entire peoples and states that now do not want war, gave the proletariat new opportunities to influence the organizers of the war. The combination of this strength with the strength of the enormous mass movement of the working people must give the struggle for peace an incomparably greater strength than it has ever been before .. The reports and speeches at the congress emphasized that the growth of the might of the USSR and the strengthening of other detachments of the world revolutionary process increase the chances of success in the struggle against the threat of imperialist war.

The new strategic orientation of the Comintern - the policy of a united workers and a broad popular front for the solution of general democratic, anti-fascist tasks - made it possible to achieve the greatest fusion of the struggle against fascism with the struggle against war and corresponded to the growing role of the proletariat in solving general democratic, national, and international problems.

The Congress recognized the defense of socialism as the great task of the international communist movement. To defend and strengthen the Soviet Union - the main conquest of the international working class, the bastion of peace, the independence [333] of small nations, the bulwark of culture - against the military invasion of the imperialists - is the great mission of the workers of all countries {1093} .

The complexity of the situation demanded that the Communist Parties be ready in war conditions to retain the possibility of leading the masses. They must fight to turn the imperialist war into a civil war in order to overthrow the exploiting regimes and open the way to peace and the liberation of the peoples. In the event of a war against the Land of Soviets, the Communist Parties were asked to call on the working people by all means to contribute to the victory of the Soviet Army over the imperialist aggressors.

Raising the question of the forms of anti-war struggle in peacetime, the congress recommended rejecting such measures as the boycott of mobilization, the boycott of the army, sabotage at enterprises, refusal to perform military service, refusal to work in youth organizations in which the bourgeoisie is engaged in militaristic education, etc. e. Such tactics could only tear the communists away from the masses and help the bourgeoisie to attack the communists even more ferociously.

The peace program worked out at the congress became the basis for the subsequent anti-war activities of the Comintern and found the most favorable response in various sections of the population, awakened new energy in the ranks of the peace fighters, kindled new hopes. The Communist parties, armed with the decisions of the congress, have noticeably increased their activity, winning more and more broad support among the masses. The Comintern's call for a joint struggle between communists and social democrats and all anti-fascists against the brown plague met with warm sympathy in most workers' organizations, especially among the left social democrats, who demanded that their parties launch a militant struggle against fascism and war.

Many difficulties, both objective and subjective, stood in the way of implementing the strategy and tactics developed by the 7th Congress. But the Comintern boldly set about implementing them. He was deeply convinced that this was the key to success in the fight against fascism and war.

The peace program developed by the 7th Congress of the Comintern mobilized considerable forces against fascism and the threat of war.

In a number of countries, under the slogan of a united popular front, a broad anti-fascist, anti-war movement developed. But, as subsequent events showed, these forces, unfortunately, were still not powerful enough organized to prevent a war.

* * *

In the face of the impending war, the Comintern and the communist parties acted as a political force, resolutely fighting against the instigators of the imperialist war, for rallying all working people in defense of the USSR, the great bulwark of peace among peoples, democracy, and socialism. In the tense situation of the mid-1930s, when fascism and imperialist reaction went on the offensive, the only true general democratic program for the struggle against fascism and war was worked out, aimed at creating a broad peace front uniting all opponents of war and fascism. It met the interests not only of the working class and other sections of the working people, but also the aspirations of all honest people to preserve peace.

Conclusion

The birth of the Second World War in comparison with the First World War took place in an immeasurably sharper mutual struggle between the imperialist powers. Kaiser Germany, which had colonies in Africa, in the Pacific Ocean and widely used Turkey's possessions in the Middle East, after the defeat in the war of 1914-1918. lost all overseas possessions. The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution reduced the spheres of capitalist exploitation and led to the strengthening of the national liberation movement, which weakened the deep imperialist "rear". At the same time, the struggle in foreign markets—the alpha and omega of imperialist foreign policy—became even more "vital" for the capitalist countries than before the First World War. The most severe crises of overproduction in 1923-1924 and 1929-1933 had a significant impact on the aggravation of foreign policy contradictions. The preparations for a new world war began by the imperialists long before the formation of its main centers and resulted in a whole system of coordinated and purposeful actions and measures covering all

spheres of public life. It was especially intense and tense in the diplomatic and military spheres, reflecting (often in a hidden form) the acuteness of the contradictions that were tearing apart the capitalist world.

Under the conditions of the growth of state-monopoly capitalism, the development of mass regular armies and secret diplomacy, this training in aggressive countries led to an ever-increasing share of the national budget, unrestrainedly spent on supporting the predatory plans for a new redivision of the world. The most powerful and developed; Germany had a military-economic base, where, with the advent of Hitler to power, the Wehrmacht was created and technically re-equipped. During 1933-1935, a small group of financial and industrial tycoons who dominated the country's economy created a centralized military-bureaucratic machine that was supposed to mobilize the nation's resources for war. This was facilitated by the criminal cooperation of the international monopoly associations of the USA, Britain, France, and Germany, which put weapons into the hands of revanchists and fascists. The preparations for the Second World War were connected with the gradual restructuring of the entire bourgeois system of ideological and psychological influence on the masses. The establishment of fascist political regimes was accompanied by monstrous social demagoguery aimed at intoxicating the population, especially youth,[335] to extreme racism and chauvinism. The mass media were used to praise the cult of power, inciting zoological hatred towards the nations against which the aggression was being prepared.

As a result of the actions of German fascism, the European continent, which made a colossal contribution to the treasury of world civilization and culture, by the mid-30s was faced with a dilemma: either soon turn into a disenfranchised colony of the "Third Reich", or unite and overturn in the fight against the aggressor his plans. It was necessary to make a choice as soon as possible, since already the first foreign policy actions of the Nazi state showed its complete opposition to the interests of freedom-loving peoples. The anti-communist orientation of the Nazi expansion created the greatest

danger for the Soviet Union, the stronghold of the world proletarian revolution.

The production of military equipment and weapons in the capitalist world, especially in the aggressor countries - Japan, Germany, Italy - grew rapidly. The aggressors chose the best methods for recruiting mass armies, improved their organizational structure, logistical and logistic support, deployed troops in the proposed theaters of military operations and operational directions. The foundations of various kinds of aggressive theories were developed, among which priority was given to "blitzkrieg".

The peculiarity of the historical situation of the birth of the Second World War was that world imperialism considered Germany and Japan as a military-political force that opposed the Soviet Union and was capable of crushing it with a blow from two sides. Britain, France, and the United States, which occupied a leading position in the capitalist world, through various kinds of diplomatic intrigues, secret deals, economic and political agreements, contributed to the development of Japanese aggression in the Far East, the remilitarization of Germany and its transformation into the main weapon in the struggle against revolutionary movements and the USSR. The anti-Soviet orientation of the ruling circles of England, France, and the USA in the 1920s and early 1930s manifested itself in attempts to prevent the Soviet Union from building socialism, to discredit the successes of the new system,

In such a complex and tense situation, the Soviet state, which from the first days of its formation had consistently pursued a policy of peace and cooperation between peoples, was forced to strengthen its defense capability. Relying on Lenin's teaching on the defense of the socialist Fatherland, the Communist Party called on the people to be vigilant, ready to defend the gains of the revolution with arms in hand, to fulfill their internationalist duty towards the international working class.

The rapid restoration of the national economy, which suffered enormous damage during the First World War and the Civil War, the implementation of the Leninist GOELRO plan, as well as the

successful implementation of the first five-year plans, at a time when devastating world economic crises were raging in the capitalist countries, became the clearest proof of the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist. The industrialization of the country and the collectivization of agriculture, fundamental changes in the spiritual sphere strengthened the political foundation of the Soviet system - the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, ensured the rapid development of the economic and defense might of the USSR. The organization and construction [336] of the army and navy were based on the economic, social, and cultural gains achieved by the Soviet people in the course of laying the foundations of socialism.

Already during the first years of the existence of the Land of Soviets, its international prestige rose immeasurably high. The foreign policy activity of the USSR constantly proved that socialism and the world are inseparable. With its successes, the Soviet Union contributed to the development of the world revolutionary process and called for unity of action in the anti-fascist struggle. As the foundations of socialism were consolidated, it became clear that its strongest weapon was superiority over capitalism in the organization of society, the state system, in the economy, and in raising the living standards and spiritual culture of the working people. By strengthening its defenses, the Soviet Union created the material basis for the struggle to prevent the Second World War and became a powerful factor in all international politics.

The USSR defended the only reasonable principle of relations between states in the conditions of the division of the world into two opposite systems - the principle of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems. Soviet foreign policy sought the renunciation of war by the states, advocated the solution of all disputed issues through negotiations on the basis of equality and mutual understanding, the development of cooperation and non-interference in internal affairs. In a situation of increasing danger of war, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Soviet government put forward in 1933 the idea of collective security, which, if necessary, assumed military-political

cooperation of states with different social systems against fascist aggression. The implementation of such an idea would make it possible to put out the hotbeds of war, to prevent them from flaring up into a big fire.

The Marxist-Leninist analysis of the origin of the war has become of great importance for the entire working-class and communist movement, the development of its political strategy and tactics of the class struggle. The militant international organization of the working class of all countries, the Communist International, oriented the proletariat to the fact that in the era of the transition of mankind from capitalism to socialism, the aggressiveness of the imperialist powers must be countered by the revolutionary energy, determination and unity of the working class and its allies.

The Comintern emphasized the strength and vitality of the Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics in relation to wars, called on the working class and communists of all countries to fulfill their international duty - to strengthen and defend the positions of the Soviet state in its struggle against the impending war. The Comintern tirelessly exposed the policies of the right-wing leaders of the Social Democracy. He developed at his congresses a clear class-party line regarding the main types of wars of the modern era, called for support for the civil wars of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, the wars of peoples fighting for their national independence, wars in defense of socialism. In the early 1930s, having put forward the tactics of a united anti-fascist popular front, the Comintern armed the working class with a program to combat fascism, which played a huge role in the international rallying of the working people during the "small" wars that prepared the ground for a world armed conflict. He emphasized the unjust, imperialist nature of a possible war between the major capitalist powers.

The question of the origin of the Second World War is the subject of a sharp ideological struggle since this is the question of the guilt of the imperialist system in the most serious crime against humanity. Marxist-Leninist historical science reveals the roots of this crime, [337] the bourgeois falsifiers are making great efforts to hide them.

Reactionary bourgeois historical science is incapable of getting out of the impasse into which rabid anti-communism has led it.

In the writings of reactionary historians, the idea is often advanced that the question of the origin of the war is so clear that there is no need to deal with it. "So much has been written on this question," says L. Norton, professor at Dartmouth University, "so much has been written that the historian, it seems, has nothing left to do" {1094} . Such a statement is needed to push through a concept that tries to hide the fact that the very nature of the exploitative system breeds wars and that the culprit of the second world war is the capitalist system. Bourgeois historiography is systematically attacking the scientific principles of historical research, adopting the "latest" sociological theories, trying to prove that Marxism is outdated and incapable of explaining the social phenomena of the 20th century, including the Second World War.

The denial of any connection between the processes of the birth of the Second World War and the socio-economic system of the capitalist states is one of the main characteristic class features of bourgeois historiography.

A significant part of bourgeois historians believe that war is a natural and ineradicable phenomenon for human society, rooted in the biological and psychological nature of people. Prominent American historian and diplomat C. Yost argues that the biggest obstacle to international peace is supposedly not capitalism, not imperialism, not nationalism, but "simply human behavior" {1095} . What is causing this "behavior"? Is it the product of a certain society? Ch. Yost diligently avoids these questions.

Thus, in the study of the origin of the Second World War, representatives of the reactionary wing of bourgeois historiography, fulfilling the social class order of the monopoly bourgeoisie, seek not only to distort and falsify the processes of the origin of the war, but also to present the entire historical process in a form opposite to the actual course of social development.

A true and reliable picture of the origin and causes of the Second World War is recreated by the Marxist-Leninist historical science of

the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the work of prominent figures in the international communist and workers' movement. In this way, a severe blow is dealt to the bourgeois falsifiers of history.

The history of the birth of the Second World War has shown what a terrible threat to mankind is posed by imperialism, which is capable of committing any crime. Having engendered fascism and then extraordinarily strengthened it, the monopoly bourgeoisie opened the way to a new world war, which from the mid-1930s, that is, with the transformation of Germany into its main center, began to move more and more visibly against humanity. The socio-political forces that opposed fascism, led by the Soviet Union, despite their titanic anti-war activities, could not stop the development of this process. Individual acts of aggression, with which the Nazis began, were their first steps towards the practical realization of the plans of German imperialism for the conquest of world domination. Humanity was on the verge of a great war.